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SHORT STORIES

A WEEKLY MAGAZINE FOR HOME AND TRAIN

No. 616. FOR WEEK ENDING OCTOBER 20TH, 1900. [ONE PENNY.

GIGANTIC BANKRUPTCY SALE CATALOGUE.

***Re* BRITISH CARPET WEAVING CO., late of Old St., London.**

F. HODGSON & SONS, of LEEDS, have purchased for Cash the whole of the business goodwill, and effects from Official Trustee in Bankruptcy. Illustrated Sale Catalogue of Brussels, Axminster, Velvet, and Fo eign Carpets and Hearthrugs can be had Post Free, if mentioning SHORT STORIES, 20/10/1900.

4/6

To readers of SHORT STORIES, 20/10/1900. On receipt of Postal Order or stamps value (Regd.) we will send you the **Largest Genuine Reversible Carpet in Brussels Finish, with Rug,** ever sold at the Price, direct from the Looms to any address on receipt of amount. Suitable for drawing room, dining-room, bedroom, &c., bordered and woven in Brussels Patterns, as an advertisement for our goods, thus saving any middle profit. Remember, these are woven and are made of a material almost equal to wool.

Thousands of these Carpets have been already sold at double these prices.

SPECIAL OFFER.—2 Carpets and 2 Rugs, 8/-.

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Admittedly The Marvel of the Age.

Woven and Reversible, rich Brussels and Turkey Patterns and Colourings, superior quality, with handsome Border to match. A Marvel of Excellence and Beauty. These Carpets are superb imitations of real Brussels, and except by the closest scrutiny, the difference cannot be detected.

6 ft. by 6 ft.	**2/11**	**REDUCED SALE PRICE.**		6 ft. by 7½ft.	**3/11**
6 ft. by 9 ft.	**4/9**	7½ft. by 9 ft.	**5/11**	9 ft. by 9 ft.	**7/6**
9 ft. by 12 ft.	**9/6**	10½ft. by 12 ft.	**11/6**	9 ft. by 15 ft.	**12/6**
12 ft. by 13½ft.	**14/6**	12 ft. by 15 ft.	**15/9**	12 ft. by 18 ft.	**19/6**
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				12 ft. by 21 ft.	**22/6**

When ordering, please mention if for Bed, Dining, Drawing, or Sitting Room, and any particular colour preferred.

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These Quilts are offered below anything in the Wholesale Trade, and cause the greatest consternation to the buyer, wondering how they can be produced for the money.

AT AN ENORMOUS REDUCTION TO CLEAR OUT.

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each, postage 6d. extra.

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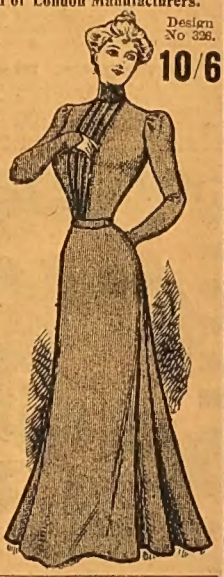
Design No. 326. 10/6.

A Costume any Lady can wear.—Prettily and neatly trimmed with tucks of velvet and cloth. **Sterling Value.** This bodice has a tight-fitting back with full front. The Skirt is cut to drape gracefully. Made in the **Specialite Serge** or **Venetian Cloth**—two splendid wearing materials. Colours: Black, Navy, Grey, Light and Dark Fawn, Brown, Green, Royal Red, Purple, Blue Grey, &c. **Good Fit Guaranteed.** Price only **10/6.** Carriage paid, 6d. extra. Skirt alone, **5/6.** Carriage, 6d. In sending order, please give bust measurement (under arms), size of waist, and length of Skirt in front.

Design No. 326.

10/6



Patterns and Self-Measurement Forms Post Free.

Design No. 2194.

10/6

Send Post-card at once.

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Regular Stock Sizes of Costumes are 34, 36, 38 in. round bust (under arms), the Skirt being 38, 40, and 42 in. long in front. Larger and Special Sizes to Customers' own measurements, 1/6 extra.

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The FASHIONABLE THREE-QUARTER SACQUE JACKET, 30in. long. Made in the renowned "Alfosco" Beaver Cloth in Black, Fawn, Brown, and Royal. This Jacket has a double-breasted front, with smoke pearl buttons. Price only **10/6.** Carriage, 6d. The GREATEST VALUE ON THE MARKET. Send for one. All sizes in stock. In sending order, give bust measurement (under arms). Money returned if not approved.

ALLEN FOSTER & CO. hold a large stock of **Ladies' Jackets, Coats, and Capes. All Styles and Prices.** ILLUSTRATIONS POST FREE.

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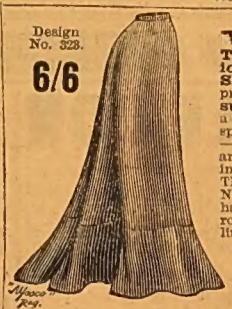
6/6



Design No. 323. 6/6.

The New and Fashionable Costume Skirt. This Skirt has proved an **immense success.** It is made in all the colours of the two splendid wearing fabrics—The Specialite Serge and the Venetian Coating. All Sizes in Stock. This Skirt is cut in the New Circular Shape, and has a 16-inch flounce round bottom, which is lined with good linenette. A Bargain for **6/6.** Carr. paid, 5d. extra. **Send for one.**

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THE LONDON MANUFACTURERS,

47 Golden Lane, Barbican, London, E.C.

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BIG PRIZE SCHEME

For MARCH, 1901.

25,602 PRIZES, value £10,000

LIST OF PRIZES:

1	Cash Prize	£50
1	Cash Prize	£40
10	Handsome Pianos, in walnut,	£40 each
5	Cash Prizes,	£25 each
10	Gents' Bicycles, Freewheels,	£17 17s.
10	Ladies' Bicycles, Free-wheels,	£17 17s.
10	Cash Prizes,	£10 each
20	Jones's Sewing Machines,	£8 each
20	Cash Prizes,	£5 each
50	Rolled Gold Lever Watches,	£2 10s. each
100	Cash Prizes,	£2 each
50	Dinner Services (56 pieces),	£2 each
50	Folding Bed Chairs,	£2 each
50	Ladies' Travelling Trunks,	£2 each
200	Cash Prizes,	£1 each
200	Ladies' Leather Hatboxes,	£1 each
100	Basket Arm Chairs, upholstered,	£1
400	pairs Blankets,	15s. per pair
200	½-doz Electro-plated Forks, large,	15s. per ½-doz.
200	½-doz. Electro-plated Forks, small,	15s. per ½-doz.
500	Ladies' Umbrellas,	15/- ea.
500	Gents' Umbrellas,	15s. each
400	Best Electro-plated Teapots,	15s. each
400	Handsome Meat Carvers, with Steel in Case,	15s. set
1000	Cash Prizes,	10s. each
1000	pairs Bed Sheets	10s. each
1000	White Linen Table Cloths,	10s. each
1000	Ladies' Umbrellas,	7/6 each
1000	Ladies' Leather Purses,	7/6 each
200	½-doz. Table Knives,	7/6 per ½-doz.
200	½-doz. Dessert do.,	7/6 per ½-doz.
2000	Ladies' Dress Lengths, Navy Blue Serge,	7/6 each
2000	Cash Prizes of	5s. each
4715	Ladies' Leather Handbags,	4s. each
4000	½-doz. Fine Linen Cambric Handkerchiefs,	2/6 per ½-doz.
4000	Handsome Work-boxes,	2/6 each
25,602		**£10,000**

CONDITIONS OF COMPETITION.

Every tablet of **Watson's Matchless Cleanser** is enclosed in a Wrapper, with signature up the centre of same. Save the WHOLE Wrapper (tops of Wrappers will be disqualified), and send, postage or carriage paid, to **Joseph Watson & Sons Limited, Whitehall Soap Works, Leeds,** not later than MARCH 31ST, 1901. Each package will be counted as one lot; separate entries must be sent under separate covers. If any parcel arrives, postage or carriage not being fully paid, such parcel will be refused. Be careful to see that the full postage is paid. Each parcel sent in must contain the full name and address of sender, and number of Wrappers sent in must be marked on the same paper. On outside of parcel write legibly **"Prize Competition."** The prizes will be awarded in the above order to the senders of the highest numbers of Wrappers. A list, giving result of the Competition, will be sent with each prize when it is sent out. Every wrapper must have first contained soap. No employee of Joseph Watson & Sons Limited will be eligible. All prizes will be despatched about April 25th.

WATSON'S MATCHLESS CLEANSER

The Best Soap for all purposes, still holds the lead. Quality perfect. Is the Housewife's Friend. It saves her health, her strength, her wealth; washes her clothes with ease and leaves them sweet and pure, and will not injure the most delicate fabric. **It has the largest sale of 1-lb. tablets in the world.** Sold by all Grocers, Oilmen, &c., throughout the United Kingdom. Buy it. Prove it and secure a Prize.

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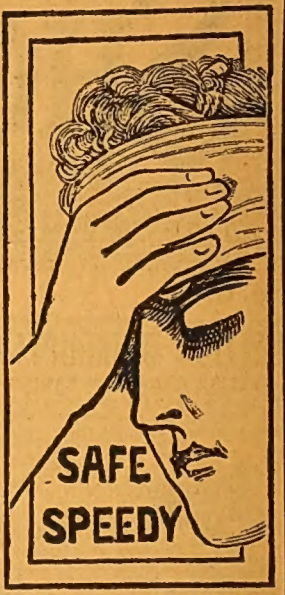

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In two sizes, **2/6** and **5/-**.

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Send me an envelope (stamped and addressed) and I will tell you how to remove all superfluous hair **free of charge.** (Send no money.) Address, in confidence, Miss E. V. (Room 3), 195 Oxford Street, London, W.

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GRATEFUL—COMFORTING.

COCOA

BREAKFAST—SUPPER.

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SHORT STORIES

No. 616.] For the Week Ending October 20th, 1900. [ONE PENNY.

THE HAND THAT FIRED THE SHOT.

"SIT still!" cried a man's imperative voice close to my ear. And then, before I had time to move or to realise what was about to happen, a hand, clutching a revolver, was thrust over my shoulder from behind.

Almost instantly there was a flash, a loud report, and a bullet whizzed between the heads of the diners in the crowded café, and at the other side of the room a man pitched forward upon the table—dead!

Blinded and deafened by the shot, it was some seconds before I recovered myself enough to turn upon the murderous unknown, who had so coolly used my shoulder as a rest. The café was in an uproar. Men rushed hither and thither in confusion, or sought shelter beneath tables. But there was one man who struggled in the grasp of half-a-dozen waiters and guests, who succeeded in forcing him into a chair and wresting the smoking weapon from his hand. As our eyes met I felt my heart knock loudly at my ribs, for I knew him, and I saw that he knew me.

Unexpected and thrilling as the meeting was, much as he had changed since I last saw him in the uniform of a Spanish officer, I knew I was not mistaken. I had too much reason to remember his dark, cruel face.

Then, like a flash, I remembered something else, and I looked for his companion. There she sat, on the opposite side of his table, a blaze of red from head to foot—hat, dress, gloves, shoes—and her handsome, dark, impassive face looked out of its crimson setting with the seeming indifference of a sphinx. But the little red-gloved hand was clenched, and the little red-shod foot tapped the floor nervously.

I was almost stunned to see her here, in New York, and, above all, with him. But when I would have gone to her side I was forced back by the arrival of the police, and in another moment they had been hurried into a carriage and were driven rapidly away.

For some time no one was allowed to leave the café. The police were arresting witnesses. In virtue of my well-known position as a newspaper man (although I had been unattached since my return from Cuba, with shattered health) I was dismissed with a question.

"Do you know anything of this, Mr. Burton?" asked Sergeant Murphy.

"I saw the man fall. The other was behind me."

"Very good. You'll be on hand if you're wanted, of course. Too bad you're not on the *Telephone* now. There's a good story in this."

"Looks like it," said I, as I strolled carelessly over to where the victim lay, stretched upon two chairs.

I have said I was a reporter. I have the news instinct strongly developed, and having seen those others together, I had small doubt whose body lay upon the chairs.

As I elbowed my way through the

There was one man who struggled in the grasp of half-a-dozen waiters and guests.

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crowd of phlegmatic officers and excited spectators his face was before my eyes, his name upon my lips. And I was right. All that was mortal of Manuel Garcia lay before me.

Knowing what I did of the past history of these three Cubans, who had so tragically thrust themselves once more into my life, I formed, very readily, a general idea of the causes which led up to this crime, and, as I sauntered homeward through the brisk November air, my mind was busy with thoughts of them, particularly of Colonel José Muchado, whom I hated with an intense ardour worthy of his own fiery race.

The papers next morning fairly bristled with "scare heads," and all manner of theories were advanced. I longed to be again in the thick of it, but months of fever and a Cuban prison had made all that impossible for the time.

Strange to say, no one had actually seen the shot fired, the table at which Muchado sat being in a corner, and partially concealed by a large palm, which formed part of the café decoration.

The police had already established the identity of Garcia, who was known to be in New York organising a filibustering expedition for the relief of the Cuban insurgents. Out of the mass of conflicting statements and futile guesses, I gathered the few facts which were of interest to me. Colonel Muchado refused to talk, and Señorita Blanco, equally silent, was under respectful police surveillance at the home of her aunt, Señora Maria de Soto de Alvarado.

I decided to call upon the señorita forthwith. I wished to recall the memory of certain languorous, Cuban days; to state certain facts which were lying heavy upon my heart. Do not mistake me, I was not in love with Señorita Blanco. She was quite indifferent to me.

But I held Colonel Muchado beneath my heel, and—blame me if you will, when you have learnt all—I was about to crush him as I would a worm. I had not sought mine enemy. He had been delivered into my hands, and I would but mete out to him his just deserts.

I found the señorita, as I had hoped, alone, her aunt being prostrated by the shock of the tragedy. As I entered the room, the señorita, still clad in that striking, red costume, rose from her chair to greet me.

The excitement of the previous night was gone, and in its place she showed a lassitude no less becoming in one of her youth and beauty.

"So," she said, extending a small, white hand. "You have come. I hoped for this. You were in the café when—when——"

She paused and shuddered, ending faintly:

"You were in the café."

"It is because of that I am here, señorita," I answered. "I do not forget the old days at Las Cascas, nor the friendship of your father, whose memory I revere."

Tears filled her eyes, and her head drooped.

"So, you knew that he is dead?"

"I knew it, señorita."

There are those who, by virtue of certain acts of mine (trivial enough, as it seems to me), have called me brave. But as she raised her head there came into the eyes of this slight girl a look which I was glad to know was not for me. She was the personification of revenge as she stood there in a blaze of hate and beauty.

"Señor, he was murdered. Shot down in cold blood. Did they tell you that? Can you believe it? He, as kind as a mother, as gentle as a priest. Yet it is so, señor. He was murdered, but," and her voice fell to a whisper, "he is avenged."

It seemed a thousand pities to break down the weak fabric of her seeming vengeance. But I had sought her with a stern purpose, which I meant to fulfil. In the face, however, of her tragic triumph I could not find it in my heart to be abrupt.

"Is he avenged," I asked, "by last night's work?"

"How else?" she answered. "It was he, Garcia, who gave information to the Spaniards that my father was in secret sympathy with the patriots and spent his fortune for the cause of *Cuba libre*. It was he who caused my father's death. And why? Because he was refused my hand. In his anger he became a dastard and betrayed him. But he forgot me. He forgot——"

"Señorita," said I, interrupting her, "may I ask how you know it was Garcia who informed?"

"From Señor Muchado, who, though a Spanish officer, rode fifty miles through the night to warn my father. But he came too late. My people told me he wept with anger when he found the arrest already made, and in his wrath he let fall the name of Garcia. That was enough for me, and although Señor Muchado refused at first to tell me what he knew, why—I am a woman, señor, and he told me, you may be sure. It was from him I learnt that Señor Garcia had fled to New York, fearing the vengeance of my father's friends, who were many. Together we followed and—we found him."

"You will pardon the question from an old friend. Are you Señor Muchado's wife?"

She flushed hotly at my words, but she replied:

"That is yet to be. No man might call me wife while Garcia lived. But I am the affianced of Señor Muchado."

There was an embarrassed pause. It was evident she meant to tell me no more. It was now my turn to speak, but when I thought of how much anguish it would cost her, I had almost held my peace. But I could not see her enter the fool's paradise of an alliance with Muchado. I had that to say which must find voice, and I steeled myself for the ordeal.

"Señorita," I said, "your story is incomplete. There are details which should be filled in. If you will listen to me, I will supply them."

She was on the alert in an instant, as if she scented some danger.

"I do not understand you, señor," she said coldly.

"I will make myself plain," I went on; and what with pity for her, and the strain I was under to keep calm, my voice sounded hard and unsympathetic. "You are not possessed, señorita, of all the facts relating to your father's death, and pardon me, much that you believe is false."

That same dangerous look flashed into her eyes on the instant, and it became her well; so well, that I, knowing it must give place to more pitiful glances, could scarce proceed upon the task I had set myself to do. I paused a little to give her anger sway.

"You insult me, señor," she cried. "You insult Señor Muchado. I must beg you to leave the house."

"One moment, señorita. You can hardly believe I would be wantonly unkind to a woman in your unhappy position. By the memory of your father, I ask you to hear me. He would have desired it, I can assure you."

There was little enough of softening in her troubled face, but she made me a sign that I might proceed.

"It is a tragic story," I began, "and while I would not drag it out to unnecessary length, I will, if you please, touch upon some matters which are not new to you, but which lead up, with less unpleasant abruptness, to that which you do not know. I wish to soften——"

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"Spare yourself, señor," she said. "I have borne much. I can bear even this forced communication. But no unnecessary details, if you please."

"When I was sent to Cuba by the *Daily Telephone*," I went on in my own way, for I knew better than she the shock she had to bear, "among my letters of introduction that to your father was considered of the greatest importance. By what secret agency I know not, his attitude was well-known to the paper. It was to Las Casas, therefore, that I at once proceeded, and it was there I made my headquarters for months. Your father, indeed all the household, were most kind to me, and when I fell ill of a fever, it was yourself, señorita, who nursed me."

She moved impatiently.

"It is not to compliment me that you force this interview upon me," she said.

"When you were called to Havana," I proceeded, unmoved, "by a note which afterwards proved to be false, I was so far recovered from my fever that I could move about the house. Your father was, at that time, in a state of great anxiety. Spanish spies were very active, denunciations frequent. He grew cautious, even to timidity—a weakness not strange in one of his age—and dangerous affiliations. Not knowing whom to trust even among his intimates, he trusted me, and from his lips I learnt much of the affairs both of his country and his family. It was in this way I learnt, señorita, of the two men who aspired to your hand—Manuel Garcia, patriot of patriots, and Colonel Muchado, of the Spanish force."

She fairly ground her teeth in anger, and plucked at the folds of her crimson gown.

"But in those troubled times, even love must wait on duty. Garcia, too well-known as an active insurgent to be desirable as an open friend, was bidden to wait until the liberation of the island. Muchado, with whose cruelties the country rang, and whose zeal for Spain outstripped the bounds of common humanity, was dismissed without hope of favour."

"I have heard enough, señor, I have heard enough!" cried the señorita, rising. "Why do you force upon me these criticisms of men, of whose qualities and motives you know nothing? Why do you torture me with useless reminiscence? Go! I beg—I command you, go!"

"Here me out, señorita. The tale will justify me in the end. Neither of these young suitors took his dismissal calmly. There were angry words with both, but your father was firm in this, gentle as was his nature, and his decision was final. So matters stood when you were lured to Havana, that you might not witness your father's arrest. They came upon us in the night, and we awoke to find the house surrounded, and, to give colour to a story of resistance, some of the servants were slain. Neither your father's age nor my sickness protected us from the inhumanity of these ruffians. Hurried from our rooms, half-dressed, our arms were pinioned, and we were forced to walk, with lariats about our necks, through the long night, and in the choking dust of our mounted captors.

"His name! The officer's name!" she demanded fiercely.

"In vain did your father demand the respect due to his years; in vain I announced my nationality and threatened the vengeance of the United States. We were driven forward with coarse jeers and brutal laughter, urged on by blows of lariats and the flat of swords. I will not dwell upon the horrors of that journey, but when, after three days of misery, we were thrown into prison, your father was prostrated under the weight of fatigue and insult, while I raved in the delirium of fever."

The señorita leant a little forward as I went on. I had begun to interest her.

"During the dreadful days that followed, penned in a stifling room with a score of other prisoners, ill-treated, ill-fed, insulted by ribald guards, your father tended me as a mother would have done. I can never forget his gentle ministration, his calm bearing under the worst indignities, his quiet courage and cheering hope.

"Upon a day when I had lain for hours in a kind of lethargy, a Spanish officer entered our filthy cell and approached your father, who had just risen from his knees beside my pallet. I saw the good man stiffen into a stern dignity of bearing, and heard his cold greeting

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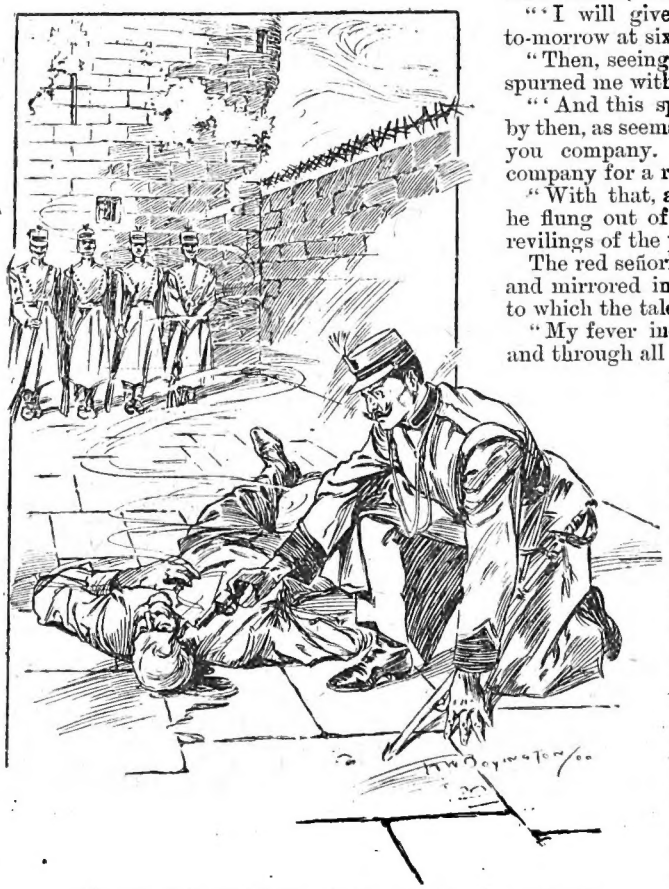
of the smart newcomer. The latter, ordering the other prisoners to fall back to the limit of the crowded room, and judging no doubt from my appearance that the end was near, addressed your father in low tones, which were yet loud enough for me to hear each word.

"'I find you fallen upon evil times, Señor Blanco,' he said with a sneer. 'I must tell you, señor, the case is desperate. Information has been lodged. Information which smells of death. You are denounced as a traitor, Señor Blanco. Do you know the danger in which you stand?'

"'Señor,' replied your father, gravely, 'I am an old man. I can meet death with a smile. But these are ill words you give me. They are an insult alike to grey hairs and an honourable name.'

"'Caramba! my friend, you take it coolly. But it is this way. You see, I am something of a power here. Do not underestimate it. At my word you are free, or—you die. I would like you to choose quickly, for the odour of this cell offends me.'"



"He placed his pistol close to that grey head and fired."

At this juncture the señorita sprang to her feet and confronted me.

"His name! The officer's name!" she demanded fiercely.

"Señorita, be calm. The officer was none other than Señor Muchado."

"You lie!" she cried. "You lie! What is the meaning of this trickery? Are you an agent of police? A spy upon my emotions? I will have you driven from the house."

Jove! what a crimson embodiment of fury was she now. Her red dress seemed but the outer sign and emblem of the fire within. She rushed to the door to order my ejectment, but I had my back against it in a twinkling and raised a warning hand.

"Señorita, I swear that I tell the truth. Hear me to the end. If you loved your father, hear me."

She paused at that, then fell to pacing the floor in a whirlwind of rage.

"Go on!" she cried. "I will hear you to the end. But I shall know if it be the truth you tell me. I will not be fed with lies."

"I thank you, señorita. I will waste no time. Your father wasted none on his decision.

"'Señor,' he answered, 'I will die in honour rather than live disgraced. You can offer me, I think, no terms which would not be too dear a price for my remaining fragment of life!'

"'You are a fool,' cried the other roughly. 'Your honour is but a thing of straw, easily fired, soon destroyed. I do not ask of you the worthless secrets of your ragged following. You may well be honoured by my terms. Give me Isabel and you may go to your home and to your futile plots. If not, I shall order the firing-squad for six o'clock to-morrow morning.'

"Your father was not shaken by these threats.

"'My daughter,' he said, 'is not for sale, even at the price of life, nor would I be party to any agreement which should bind her to one who has shown himself a scoundrel.'

"Muchado, in a white heat of rage, menaced the old man with his clenched fist.

"'I will give you,' he cried, 'until to-morrow at six.'

"Then, seeing that I watched him, he spurned me with his foot, saying:

"'And this spy, if he be not carrion by then, as seems most likely, shall keep you company. A Gringo dog is fit company for a renegade ass.'

"With that, and a mouthful of oaths he flung out of the room, amid the revilings of the prisoners."

The red señorita hung upon my words and mirrored in her face every emotion to which the tale gave rise.

"My fever increased with the night, and through all the long, sad hours your father never left my side. Never have I seen such strength of character. Forgetful of himself, he tried to ease what were not unlikely to have proved my last moments. For myself I was too weak to care what happened, and when day broke I lay barely conscious of life. True to his word Colonel Muchado entered the cell a little before six. What was said I could not hear, but suddenly I was dragged roughly from my pallet, only to fall limp and inert upon the floor. Aroused to consciousness by the rough handling I had received, I was aware of your father speaking with grave distinctness.

"'I have nothing more to say, señor. You have my answer.'

"'To the yard then. We will soon end this folly. As for the Gringo, let him die as he lies. He is not worth a bullet.'

"I heard the tramp of the departing guard, the rattle of their accoutrements, the clang of the cell door. Then, after what seemed an interminable time, there came through the grated window the tramp of those marching feet, the thud of rifle butts upon the pavement, the sound of orders sharply given. By a supreme effort of the will I turned upon my hands and knees, and crept towards the window, which, as I knew, overlooked the prison

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yard. But the window was high and I could not rise to my feet.

"My fellow prisoners were, moreover, crowding about the grating and struggling for a sight of the tragedy without. But, noticing my futile efforts, they drew back, ashamed of their idle curiosity in the face of one whose close connection with the sorrows of that grand old man, gave him rights above their own. Two of them raised me to my feet and supported me while I looked out through the grated slit, nor did the others seek to disturb me, being touched, I doubt not, by my weakness and the cruelty of the deed at which I gazed."

The señorita sat, a huddled mass of red drapery, from which her dark eyes stared, fixed and tearless.

"The firing party stood beneath the window, so near that I could almost have put forth a hand and touched them. Over against the dead wall at the other side of the yard your father faced them, erect and fearless, with bared head and shirt thrown open at the breast—a gallant sight, señorita. I shall see it while I live. Between the soldiers and their victim, Colonel Muchado paced to and fro, white as the plume of his shako. He held his watch in his hand and glanced at it nervously and often. Your father stood like a rock, in sharp contrast to the other's feverish mood.

"'You have two minutes more, señor,' Muchado called out sternly.

"Your father disdained to answer, but catching sight of my pale face behind the bars he smiled and waved his hand. Muchado did not look up. His agitation was intense. The tiger and the cur fought within him. Again he called:

"'One minute more.'

"Still no answer. Only a moving of the lips in prayer. That last terrible minute seemed an age, but at length the colonel spoke again:

"'The time is up, Señor Blanco. Do you still refuse? Then here you die, a traitor to your country and your sovereign.'

"Following this came the short, sharp words of command, and as the order 'Fire!' fell from Muchado's lips the levelled rifles cracked and a brave man met ignoble death. While the smoke yet hung heavily in the yard Muchado walked over to the prostrate form. Whether he saw some sign of life I cannot say, but he placed his pistol close to that grey head and fired. Then with a braggart's oath, cried out:

"'So perish all the enemies of Spain!'

"I saw no more. The strain had been too great, and I fell back into the arms of my fellow-prisoners, unconscious."

The señorita, no longer an incarnate vengeance, cowered, weeping, in her chair. I went to her and touched her gently on the shoulder.

"Señorita," I said, "you once accepted the unsupported word of Colonel José Muchado in a matter of life and death. I do not ask you to accept mine on those terms. Some time during his last sad night on earth your father found means to write this brief statement, this last farewell, hoping that by some means it might come at last into your hands. Had I died, my fellow-prisoners were sworn to see it delivered, if fate permitted.

"But when, through the influence of the American consul I was set free, I bore the letter in my breast. Too ill to remain in Cuba I came to the United States, resolved to seek you again, when my health should be restored. Having found you here I have nothing left to do but give you this little scrap of paper on which are written your father's last words."

She took the paper mechanically, but did not open it.

"You have given me a cruel blow, señor," she said, "but I thank you. It is better so. I cannot but believe you, and I will not insult your honour by reading this paper before I tell you so. I beg of you to leave me now. I wish to be alone."

And so I left her, nor did I ever see her again, save once, and then not face to face. Receiving an offer from the *Telephone* to serve as special correspondent at Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, and the police considering my testimony in the Garcia murder case as of no importance, I accepted, in the hope that new scenes might expedite my cure.

After completing this assignment I made a tour of the continent, and at Madrid made one of the crowd that gathered to witness the return of General Weyler.

As I stood in the street among the throng, a carriage drove briskly by, and in it I caught one glimpse of a face I could never forget. It was Señorita Blanco, the wreck of her former self, clad now in deepest black, and with all the old fire departed from her face. It made me inexpressibly sad, for I knew, as no one else could know, the fire that still burned within.

When I returned to New York, Muchado had paid the penalty which the law exacts from murderers. Into the details of his trial, in which Señorita Blanco was the chief incriminating witness, I shall not enter. That he was a murderer my own eyes had shown me.

Not, let me confess it, in that New York café, but in that earlier time when he had done to death that gallant gentleman, Señor Juan Blanco. Of the murder of Garcia he was innocent, but the silence of two persons sent him to the gallows. Señorita Blanco and I sat in judgment upon him, and rendered the silent verdict, "Death."

For the voice that cried out in the café, "Sit still," was addressed, not to me, but to the Señorita Blanco, and the hand which was thrust over my shoulder for the fatal shot was small and feminine, and trimly gloved in red.

FREDERIC L. WHEELER.

Mr. Bowser has suddenly decided to complete the holiday which came to such an untimely end when he took a house in the country.

WATCH FOR HIS RETURN.

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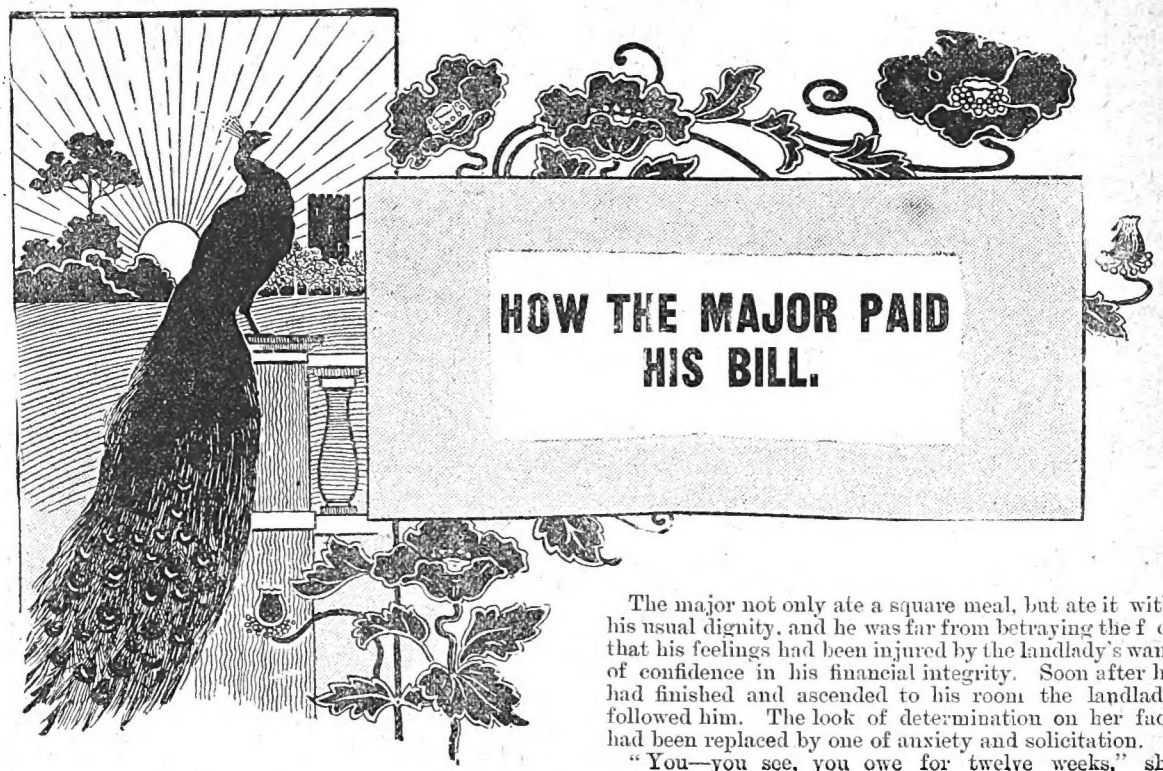

HOW THE MAJOR PAID HIS BILL.

When Major Crofoot reached his boarding-house the other evening there were surface indications of trouble. There was a policeman hanging about the front steps; the major's trunk was down in the front hall; several boarders were lounging about with expectant looks, and the landlady had evidently made up her mind to do or die.

It took the major just thirty seconds to realise the situation. The landlady was about to address him when he held up his hand to interrupt her and blandly observed:

"My dear Mrs. Roberts, I have a favour to ask."

"It won't do no good to talk to me," she replied.

"Will you do me the favour to hand me a statement of my indebtedness? I believe I owe you for five or six weeks' board. If not too much trouble——"

"You owe for twelve weeks, and it won't do any good to talk."

"If not too much trouble," continued the major with dignity, "I should like a statement. It may be twelve weeks, as you say. I pay but little attention to these trifles. Indeed, you may make it out for twelve weeks, and then I will draw you a cheque for the amount. I have been very busy, as you know, and if I have caused you any inconvenience I am sorry for it."

"You—you will pay," gasped the landlady, as she stood and stared at him.

"Should you want three months in advance you can have it as well. So long as I'm drawing a cheque I might as well make it for £40 or £50 as £10 or £20. It might be well, while I am eating my dinner, for you to return my trunk to my room and give the policeman a hint to move on. Come to my room half-an-hour hence"

The major not only ate a square meal, but ate it with his usual dignity, and he was far from betraying the fact that his feelings had been injured by the landlady's want of confidence in his financial integrity. Soon after he had finished and ascended to his room the landlady followed him. The look of determination on her face had been replaced by one of anxiety and solicitation.

"You—you see, you owe for twelve weeks," she explained as she handed him the bill.

"Exactly—I see," he replied, as he received it. "Twelve weeks at thirty shillings a week is £18. Sorry if you have been inconvenienced. Don't you want £30?"

"Oh, major. I am sorry if I hurt your feelings," she protested.

"I must say that my feelings have been lacerated to an extent, but I am to blame for it. I will write you a cheque for £18. Should you want a loan during the month—£50, £100, £200—please let me know. There you are, my dear woman—there you are. It is your due, and I am glad to hand it to you, but I must confess that your want of confidence in my financial integrity is something of a shock to me. One should pay for his room and board of course, but where one is originating, evolving, promoting, and organising to the extent of millions——"

"I know, major—I know," interrupted the landlady, "but I'm no business woman. I couldn't tell about your schemes. You took me in on two of them, and I was to make millions, but I haven't seen a shilling yet."

"But you didn't secure any stock. You delayed until it was too late. I gave you first chance, but you didn't come to time."

"Was that it?" she asked, as she nervously played with the cheque. "I asked some of the boarders about it, and they said your schemes were all wind."

The major looked at her in a pitying way for a couple of minutes, and then got up and walked to and fro for a time before he said:

"My dear woman, you have common sense. If you hadn't you couldn't run a boarding-house. You

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must let common sense guide you in all things. On two occasions, owing to your confidence in my financial integrity, I have tried to make you a millionaire. Your timidity has been the stumbling block. Let me present you a few facts. You have heard of Egypt, of course?"

"I—I think I have," she faltered.

"One of the oldest countries on earth. In connection with Egypt you must have heard of mummies?"

"Yes."

"Very well. Egyptian kings, queens, princes and great men and women were dying ten thousand years ago. Their bodies were preserved in spices. To-day they are simply relics—souvenirs—curiosities. Every museum must have its mummies. Same with all side shows and private collectors. If mummies were easier to be got and cheaper in price, almost every family would have one in place of a piano. Do I make myself plain?"

"Yes."

"You have a piano here, for instance. It is tuned about once in fifteen years. You have fourteen boarders. Every evening they gather to hear someone drum on the old tin pan. If you had a £5 mummy in the parlour don't you see how much more educational and entertaining it would be? No drumming—no squalling—no complaints to the police, but the fourteen would gather round the mummy while someone reads Egyptian history.

"You must follow me—you can't help but follow me. Can't you realise that if every public school had its mummy the general interest would be enhanced a hundred per cent.? Can't you understand that if a restaurant had a mummy on exhibition, it would beat any sort of music or free lunch?"

"Yes—but—but——"

"Then there is nothing more to say. The demand for mummies is firm and steady. There is always a scarcity in the market. They are simply picked up here and there in Egypt, with nothing like system in buying and selling. To-day—this evening—now, we organise: 'The Mammoth Mummy Export Company.' We capitalise at £500,000. We make a business of buying and selling mummies. We deal only in the genuine article, and we tackle nothing which hasn't been dead at least 10,000 years. Every mummy warranted to have been of royal blood. No common people bought or sold. We buy for £2 apiece and sell for £20. There's a profit of £18 on every one handled, and we'll handle 100,000 per year easily. Do you want anything better than that?"

"It seems all right," doubtfully replied the landlady, "but——"

"And there you are, and there you are," replied the major, as he reached for the cheque. "I have paid you my bill; you turn round and use this cheque to secure £10,000 of stock at low figures. Dividends will go up 100 per cent. at the very least, and if I can work you in as secretary I'll do it. Woman, permit me to congratulate you. To-morrow you can go and order your first bushel of diamonds."

"But you've taken the cheque away from me!" she protested.

"Certainly. You must protect your stock or it can't be held for you. It must be plain to you; it can't help but be plain. We incorporate to-morrow, and the certificates will be ready in two weeks. Meanwhile read up on mummies, as we may decide to send you to Egypt to do the buying. You've got to be posted up, or those fellows over there will work off ordinary mummies on you for kings and queens. My dear woman——"

"But, major, I don't——"

"But you do—you must—you can't help it, and now as I shall be busy the rest of the evening I'll say good-night and go to work. Not a word—not a word. You have my influence behind you, and all will be right and again I congratulate you and ask your pardon for overlooking my little indebtedness. Going? Gone? But keep quiet about it—keep quiet."

"Major Crofoot, I—I——"

But the major was on the other side of the door and the door was locked.

C. B. Lewis.

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NEW SERIES.

THE ADVENTURES OF THREE ACTORS.

I.—A Night at the Booth.

HALKETT, Boddreys, and myself were temporarily engaged in that interesting occupation, "The inspection of pavements and public buildings," in other words we were "out of a shop," dragging through the ofttimes tedious weeks between one engagement and another.

"What shall we do to-night?" asked Boddreys.

"Oh, stand on our heads and sing 'God save the Queen,' anything for a change from this monotony," said Halkett.

At the end of our summer tour we found ourselves near the pretty town of Kanisborough; in preference to going down to London, parading the Strand and helping to support the Bodega, Marble Halls, and other liquid institutions, we decided, as we had fixed our autumn tour, to spend our four weeks' in what vacation Halkett called "sylvan and rural rusticity."

In a fortnight we had done everything. Fished and bathed in the river, rowed on the canal, walked and bicycled in every possible direction for miles round. The evenings hung heavily, there was nowhere to go to, and evening was just the time we began to look for the accustomed excitement and get restless.

"Call in the landlady and ask her where the nearest theatre is; if it's fifty miles away I'll ride to it," said I.

The worthy dame came in at Boddrey's call, rubbed her nose with her apron, sniffed loudly, stuck her fat arms akimbo and said:

"Well, young gentlemen, and what do you want?"

"We want to know where's the nearest theatre, hall, or schoolroom, where any kind of entertainment is being held from Shakespeare down to a penny concert or a temperance lecture," said Halkett.

"Or a magic lantern show will do."

"Or a Pepper's Ghost show," I chimed in.

"You won't get nothing o' that sort about here," said she.

We all groaned in chorus.

"There's not no theatre nearer nor Northampton, where you come from to me, and I don't know as it's hopen this 'ere 'ot weather, leastways, my sister, as you've been staying with there, says it often isn't, this 'ere 'ot weather."

We groaned again.

"Not even a concert, or a lantern entertainment?" asked Halkett again.

"Not as I knows on, Mr. Halkett," she replied, "but I 'ave heard as 'ow a booth 'as set up at Great Kanis, three miles away."

"A booth," we all shouted together, "why didn't you tell us so at once?" added Boddreys.

"Well, you see sir, you didn't ask me. You didn't say nothing about a booth, now did you?"

We owned we didn't to get rid of her, and bundled her out of the room with a blessing, and started at once.

It was a delightful walk to Great Kanis across the fields, but I fear we did not thoroughly appreciate the cool and calm hush of the evening, the song of the birds, the babble of the brook, and the fragrance and gay colours of the many flowers.

Just then we had a severe attack of footlight fever and would have exchanged it all for the artificial splendours of the front of a theatre.

At the door of the wooden portable we espied the bibulous-looking acting-manager yelling:

"This way to the reserved seats."

He recognised us as brothers in affliction, or as he termed it, "members of his perfession," and gave us three reserved seats at threepence per head.

There was no mistaking the artiste in him. Grease paint strayed all over his face in small patches, taking up permanent abode in odd corners.

He was palpably dressed in his "props," which consisted of a pair of tight white trousers of some forty years ago fashion, a double-breasted coloured waistcoat, which might possess some fifteen years, and a light alpaca frock coaching coat, which might date back perhaps fifty or sixty years.

These were surmounted by a white beaver hat; and we must not forget the huge, coloured tie, the bows of which stuck out like two ears. A comical figure he looked, but what cared he, he was there to attract attention and lure the yokels to part with their coppers.

He had the air of a man who knew his intrinsic value to a nicety and that assurance histrionic experience so often begets.

We took him over the way to the "Red Lion" after the first act (he had already been killed once, and was not to be slain again until the third act) and there he told us how many times he had played Richard III., his

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favourite part, Hamlet and Macbeth, and what a huge success he had been in several places we had never heard of.

I think they must have been in the Rhondda Valley, or somewhere in Wales by the sound of their names, but we were duly impressed, and he, in consequence, was very pleased and very thirsty.

We took our seats in the building and sat listening to the orchestra, which consisted of a harmonium and a cornet—not a bad mixture, by the way, if your nervous system is in fairly good order.

We had not been there long when up bustled the fat proprietress of the building and manageress of the company, who had been taking money at the penny and twopenny doors.

She leant over the rows of chairs immediately in front of us and peering closely into our faces, said in a voice loud enough to be heard all over the theatre:

"You be 'pros,' ain't you?"

We admitted the soft impeachment.

"I don't take no money from 'pros,'" said she, "you is as free to come in here, as you is to go into the best theatres in the kingdom. My acting manager had no right to take your money. There's your threepence. there's yours, and there's yours," and she dumped our coppers back into our hands. We protested, but she answered:

"You can stand me a drink afterwards, if you like, but I shall always be pleased to welcome you here as often as you like to come."

So much for those worthy people.

"The play's the thing——" and what we came to see.

The title of the play was *The Wooden-legged Murderer*, and the plot revolved round a double-dyed villain, who in common with scoundrels generally, possessed two legs, only in this case one was made of wood. This wooden leg was hollow, and in the cavity was secreted a small rifle. All who thwarted the old villain's wicked designs and those whom he imagined he hated, fell victims to this unique firearm, or rather fire-leg. A reason for slaughter, however, was not always necessary, he liked it presumably because it was exciting and his nature to do so.

It was a thrilling moment when the first murder occurred. A rich man sits in his beautiful mansion (its beauties we had to imagine) talking to himself about his enormous wealth—as rich men always do in melodramas—when he is startled by someone with a dot-and-go-one tread, making off with that £40,000 in notes and gold he has left in the bureau in the next room. The thief passes through the room and is making for the French windows to get away. The rich man being brave as well as wealthy, attacks him and drags him down the stage. Then a fearful struggle ensues. Finally, however, the plutocrat is thrown down in one corner and off hobbles the villain as quickly as his wooden leg will allow him, but he hardly reaches the window when his antagonist rise to follow him.

It is a supreme moment, for up goes the wooden leg, the trigger is pulled in the trouser pocket and the first victim falls.

Two servants, hearing the noise, enter the room hurriedly and also fall victims to the fatal leg. Three deaths being a fair number for the first act, the curtain comes down on a dramatic exit by the villain.

In the second act we have detectives and policemen galore.

The villain shoots a detective in this act, and the deed is scarce done when two policemen rush on from either side and collar him simultaneously. After thoroughly searching him—this is a comedy scene, for policeman No. 476 is a comedian—and finding no weapon upon him they think it as well to arrest him on suspicion.

However, they relinquish this idea upon the old man telling them that it was the hero who did the deed, which, of course, they immediately believe, knowing the young man in question to be a most exemplary person of most gentle habits.

They proceed to trot after the hero, bearing the corpse between them (so like policemen who are in a hurry), when Bobbie No. 476 drops his half of the dead man (a laugh here) and declares he has an idea. No. 674 seems surprised at this and warns him not to hurt the defunct with his mental activity.

At which 476 becomes alarmed and anxiously questions his comrade as to the possibility of killing a "dead man twice." Whereupon 674, sitting on the corpse's chest, tells him how his dead grandmother drank a bottle of whiskey the night after she died—at least the bottle was empty in the morning, and there was a strong smell of spirits in the room. It would be hard, indeed, if a little fun could not be had at the expense of corpses, seeing that there are so many in the piece.

No. 476's idea, which he finally heroically delivers to the gods, is to the effect that he cannot believe the hero to be guilty because he knew him as a youngster in petticoats, toddling at his mother's side. The value this evidence of his innocence has, would of course be incalculable in a court of law.

The third act is ushered in with yet more murders, the list by this time has become simply appalling. We have noticed that several unmistakable persons are dying twice and thrice over. (Who will say the dead return not?) In fact one man amuses us considerably by falling every time like a tin soldier. An effective stop is put to this, however, by the villain at last being accused and arrested. The circumstances which lead to his apprehension are these:

A man is found shot, quite dead as usual, but this time with his eyes wide open. It occurs to one bright detective that if they scoop out the eye of the murdered man, the picture of the murderer will be found upon the retina. Nor are they wrong, for they all upon examination of the eye declare they see there a portrait of the wooden-legged man with his leg lifted.

The next act opens with a court scene.

After the comedy man had set the whole court by the ears with his overpowering wit, made rude remarks to the judge about his appearance, wife, family, and other personal matters, the turn of the villain comes to appear in the dock.

The dock is placed immediately on the judge's left, so near that judge and prisoner could shake hands if they were so minded.

Upon the left of the desk stands a glass of water containing the accusing eye.

The examination proceeds quietly for some time until the comedian, no longer able to repress himself, rushes into the dock, turns the villain out and addresses the judge and court:

"Shure, sir, it's a whole pack of lies he's afther telling ye, so that he can bring our poor, innocent boy, Master Harry there, to the gallows. But don't be afther taking any notice of the spalpeen, Misther Judge."

"Constable, remove this witness," commanded the judge sternly.

"Ah, there's a dear kind gintleman, sure ye haven't

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the heart to turn me out of this nice, comfortable cow stall."

"Stand down, sir, immediately," shouted the judge.

"Shure, Mr. Judge, I niver learnt how to sthand down, I only learnt how to sthand up. But I'll sit down to plase ye, and that by your own illigant self," and he climbed over the dock, and sat himself down beside his lordship.

"How dare you, sir; leave me immediately," said the judge, now hoarse with rage.

"I'll niver lave ye, sir. I'll sthay wid yez for the rest av me life and one year longer if ye loike and there's me hand on it, and ye're a fine, handsome, kind-hearted jewel of a gintleman yez are."

The judge thrust the proffered hand away and called again to the constable to remove him, whereupon the comedian and the policeman struggled lustily.

"Oh, you dirty, ugly divil, wid a heart as hard as a sthone," shouted the comedian to the judge as he was being dragged away. "Shure, I would as soon talk to the divil himself as to yourself. Oh, I'll bate the face off yez. Let me get at him."

He struggled free again and made a dash for the judge, who beat him off with bundles of legal documents. The police soon had him again, but not before the glass of water containing the eye had been knocked over. The audience enjoyed this horse-play comedy hugely, and still louder did they laugh when the whole court, police and witnesses, went down on their hands and knees to look for the lost eye. But they did not think to search the villain, who had been very busy during the comedy scene.

"My lord," said the clerk of the court, "the eye is lost."

"It was the only conclusive evidence we possessed," said the judge, "and much as I believe him to be guilty I must declare the prisoner a free man."

"No, not free, for I have the other eye."

It was the detective who spoke. He entered in the nick of time, holding aloft in his hand another glass of water containing the other eye. The audience applauded loudly, the villain cursed and scowled, and those on the stage rejoiced exceedingly and were glad.

The examination of the prisoner continued and, notwithstanding the still irrepressible comedian, finally worked up to this point.

Said the prisoner, seizing the glass containing the eye from off the judge's table:

"So this is the only evidence you have against me?"

"And such overwhelming evidence that it will doom you to the criminal's death you so richly deserve," replied the judge amid applause.

With a loving glance at the liquid as heheld it against the light, admiring it as he might a glass of old and rare wine, the prisoner uttered these words:

"Then this is how I dispose of it," and suiting the action to the words he swallowed the water and eye in one dramatic gulp.

The court was dumfounded, the case dismissed, and the prisoner discharged there and then, looking none the worse for his impromptu lunch.

The next and last act concerned itself with the triumph of virtue and confusion to the wicked ones, especially to the wooden-legged villain. His end was sudden.

He was at his old tricks again, and was about to aim his wooden leg at the hero, escape for whom seemed impossible, when something goes wrong with the rifle; it bursts, there is a fiss of red fire, a loud explosion, and the old villain disappears over the bridge, blown to little pieces, at least so the hero told us. We take his word for it. So ended the drama of "The Wooden-Legged Murderer."

We were very silent as we went home across the fields in the moonlight. I think we better appreciated the charms of the walk or perhaps we were listening to the little white throat singing his night song in the hedgerow.

Be that as it may, one thing was certain, we were completely cured of our footlight fever for quite a week.

Douglas Vigors.

[Next week: A Panto-Sidelight.]

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THE LOVE OF LENORE.

In the shady garden of an old-fashioned, shabby-genteel-looking house not far from the cathedral town of Wilchester, a girl was making remarkably good revolver practice. A curious pastime for one of her age and sex, but Lenore Stanley had passed the first seventeen years of her life in New Zealand, her father having been a professor at the university of Dunedin.

He had taught her to shoot and had brought her up on lines of his own.

"That's all right, I think," she said to herself after breaking her third ginger-beer bottle in succession. "My hand has not lost its cunning. I wonder where he is? He surely won't fail me again to-night!"

The girl's dark eyes, inherited from her Italian mother, flashed with a dangerous light and her mobile lips worked with a mutinous expression.

"If I thought he was with her!" she muttered between her little white teeth, "I would——" and her fingers closed convulsively on the miniature weapon in her hand. She threw herself down in a deck chair and thought—not pleasant thoughts, not altogether fair thoughts—for when was jealousy ever just?

Life had been hard for Lenore since her father's death which had occurred soon after their arrival in the old country three years ago. She was then left with no near relations and few friends, with forty pounds a year and an education that compared favourably with that of any Newnham or Girton graduate,

She was teaching history and literature at a ladies' college in Wilchester and was spending her holidays in rooms within reach of Harold Courtenay, her lover and the light of her lonely heart.

Last night he had disappointed her and to work off her restlessness she had brought out the little revolver which her father had given her to carry on their long rides up country in Maori-land. At last her quick ear caught the whizz of cycle wheels. She knew it was Harold and half rose from her chair in expectation.

"At last I escaped!" he said, bending down and taking Lenore's hand in his. "The mater had a tennis party and I was on duty. I only got away by offering to ride home with Kathleen Bryce."

"No wonder you are late! It was hardly worth your while to come. Were you taking her home last night, too?"

"No, she was taking me. At least, we went over to their place and she drove us home in her cart. It was a ripping night for a spin. I only wished it had been you, little one."

Lenore's lip curled and she brought her brows a trifle closer together.

"Such an afterthought as that was not worth keeping for twenty-four hours," she retorted. "There is a far cry from Miss Bryce, the aristocratic belle of Wilchester, to an unknown school-teacher who is not in any 'set' and can only be recognised as a mere acquaintance when Society's eye is upon us."

"A far cry indeed, like ginger-beer to champagne! The one easy to get, and cheap and nasty when you've got it, the other stored out of sight like a priceless treasure," said Harold throwing himself on the grass at her side and taking possession of her other hand.

Something touched her sense of humour and she laughed. It was no use trying to be angry with Harold.

"What a brilliant attempt to idealise a very prosaic smile! But I must be the ginger-beer, cheap and easy to get. Governesses have long been a drug in the market, while Miss Bryce——"

"Oh, shut up, there's a dear girl! I didn't come to talk about that dressed-up doll. I came to be with you, to have you all to myself. Hullo! What in the world's this! A dainty thing, too!"

He had put his hand upon the revolver which Lenore had dropped on the grass when she heard him coming. She now made a quick movement to possess herself of the weapon and in the scuffle the remaining loaded chamber went off. In an agony of terror she saw the blood stains on her lover's white coat sleeve and ran to the house for help.

Her landlady came running out and they soon found that the injury was of a slight nature, merely a flesh wound below the elbow.

Lenore bathed and bandaged it with loving care, and in those few minutes Harold Courtenay saw what a wealth of love was his. Hitherto his advances had been met with a tantalising reserve, and now in the deepening evening shades she atoned for her past unresponsiveness by a tenderness that was new and bewilderingly sweet.

"It was all my fault, and I would not have hurt you for worlds!" she whispered, trembling in spite of herself.

"My darling, it was the best thing that could have happened to me. Supposing you had got the bullet instead of me! That would have been too horrible," he said, drawing her to him with his uninjured arm. "It is worth far more than this scratch to have you like this," and he kissed her quivering lips till the smiles had returned to her eyes.

The course of their love made great strides after this. Harold found Lenore more and more enthralling. She was full of the winning grace of a woman who loves and knows she is loved in return; no longer tormented by jealousy she gave rein to the warm, loving nature that had so long been stifled within her. The summer days sped by in uncounted joys.

With the end of the holidays came the inevitable return to work and the realms of conventionality. Lenore pulled herself together with mingled feelings. She felt she could not go on living at the high emotional pressure of the past fortnight without letting the work suffer by which she made her way in the world, and so far the lovers had only talked of love, there had been no question of marriage. Harold had surrendered himself to the charm of her society with the readiness of his pleasure-loving nature, but he was not yet prepared to face parental displeasure by marrying in opposition to his father's wishes. Mr. Courtenay senior had made his money quickly, the coat of arms was of recent purchase and Harold was to marry a wife whose lineage should be even longer than the parental purse. The young man was in no hurry to fetter himself, his main ambition was to make a name in the world of sport.

He had started a small racing stud and was training as a gentleman jockey, with the full consent of Mr. Courtenay, who grudged no expense so long as his son's hobbies threw him into smart society.

Harold was somewhat relieved when Lenore propounded the return to practical life, yet, manlike, the first time they met in Wilchester and she kept her side of the bargain, he was ready to throw prudence to the winds for the sake of a kiss or a caress.

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Lenore lived with one of the other teachers at the College and was pretty free to come and go as she pleased, so through the glorious autumn weather, Saturday afternoon found her and Harold taking long country walks or revelling in the seclusion of the garden where the accident had occurred.

Kathleen Bryce of Brydon Court, upon whom Mr. Courtenay had fixed as his future daughter-in-law, was considerably mystified and not a little piqued at Harold's frequent refusals to join her bicycle and tennis parties. She began to suspect the existence of a rival and set her wits to work to discover the truth.

She had a young cousin at the College, upon whose love of romance she worked successfully till she had unravelled the threads of the mystery. On a fine October afternoon she decided to make practical application of the knowledge she had gained.

Mounting her cycle she rode slowly along the road leading to Needham station, which she believed to be the usual trysting-place of the lovers. Presently she saw Harold Courtenay bowling along on his machine. She dismounted and began to get out her pump.

"Good afternoon!" he called out, making as though he would go on.

"Oh, Mr. Courtenay, would you mind helping me? I can't pump up this tyre."

She looked very pretty and there was no help for it. But even Harold's good nature was not proof against a suppressed "Confound it!"

He soon pumped the tyre up and was wondering how he should give her the slip, when she sprang into the saddle, saying:

"It's such a glorious day for a ride. I'm going to Needham to get some blackberry trails for my snuggery. I love the red and brown tints, and the wood is carpeted with them just now."

He reviled his fate and sought in vain for a way of escape. He could not ride to Needham with Kathleen when Lenore was waiting there for him, nor could he break faith by persuading Kathleen to go elsewhere. He racked his brains in vain and quickened his pace in the hope of his companion giving in.

But Miss Bryce was not thus to be shaken off. She felt she was on the right track and kept up the speed manfully for a good spurt. Then she told him laughingly that she was afraid he wanted to get rid of her. He stammered an apology and resigned himself to his fate, hoping that some happy chance might keep Kathleen and Lenore apart.

Miss Bryce noted his embarrassment and sought to distract him by her most approved wiles. She was a very lively companion and he had regained something of his good humour when they reached the station, beyond which lay the woods.

"I just want to see a man about a horse," said Harold, dismounting, "so I'll say good-bye. I hope you'll find the blackberry trails all right."

"I'm not in hurry. I'll wait till you've seen your man and then you can help me pick the trails. It will be much more fun if there are two of us."

He hurried on to the platform and looked eagerly for Lenore. There was not a trace of her to be seen. She had evidently missed the train. Thank the kind Fates, the storm was averted!

He was quite his usual, sunny self when he came back to where Kathleen was waiting for him. They had a very good time in the woods, and any occasional qualms as to Lenore's whereabouts were soon dissipated by the bright sallies and ready repartee of his companion.

She had dressed herself with studied simplicity for this woodland ramble, and Harold came to the conclusion that he had never seen her look so nice or found her so free from affectation.

"Oh, I must have that spray!" she exclaimed, darting from his side into a tangled glen below where they were standing. The next moment she lay moaning among the bracken, unable to move.

"I can't walk, it's my knee," she said piteously to Harold who had promptly gone to pick her up.

"By jove! That's bad! Then I must carry you, if you don't mind. Tell me if I hurt you. Is that all right?" he asked kindly as he raised her in his arms.

"Yes, quite. You've not hurt me much," she answered with a pretty show of patient resignation, at the same time putting her arms round his neck and settling down with a sigh of content which he took to be pain.

Lenore had started directly after school taking some lunch with her so as to make the most of the glorious weather. She had gone to a cottage near Needham station to get some milk and out of sheer lightheartedness had decided to watch Harold's arrival and let him have a little hunt for her.

When she saw him ride up with Kathleen Bryce a perfect tumult of perplexing emotions possessed her. Every solution of the problem except the right one suggested itself to her in rapid succession. Conquering her first impulse to make her presence known she resolved to watch the game from her coign of vantage, and as she did so many a chance remark she had heard lately in College about the coming engagement of Miss Bryce and Harold Courtenay came to her mind.

Hardened and embittered she waited and watched, like a tigress she was ready to spring, all the evil in her nature was inflamed by the sense of having been tricked, duped, betrayed into false hopes. She saw the pair go gaily off, and saw them return.

She noted the care with which Harold put her rival into the train and only with great difficulty did she suppress the cry of passion that rose to her lips.

She crept into another carriage of the train which conveyed them, and on their arrival waited till Harold had placed Kathleen in the carriage he had ordered to take her to the Court from Wilchester Station.

He cycled away in search of a doctor and the moment his back was turned, Lenore ran to the side of the carriage and poured forth a torrent of accusations:

"Ah! Coward! You want to steal my lover! You must needs plot and scheme to win him from me! You have have been acting a part to feel his arms round you!"

Kathleen was startled out of all self-possession and cowered in her seat as if in physical fear. She was on the verge of hysterics when a burly porter intervened:

"Cabby, you'd better drive her 'ome. And you'd better move on quietly, or there'll be a bigger row than there is," he added, drawing Lenore from the carriage door.

* * * * *

In a few weeks' time Lenore Stanley had been requested to resign her post at the College, owing to the scandalous, cleverly concocted tales which Kathleen Bryce had set about in Wilchester in revenge for the scene at the station, and as a further blow to her intercourse with Harold.

Much to her disgust young Courtenay had not followed up the advantage she gave him at Needham, she strongly suspected that Lenore had still a strong hold on his affections, so she worked the wires with skill and

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cunning. It was an utterly uneven contest and Lenore was worsted.

Peace had been restored between the lovers after that unlucky Saturday afternoon and Harold had sought to make up for the pain Lenore had suffered by unremitting tenderness and a thousand pretty attentions; but when scandal became busy with her name he could think of no better course than to persuade her to leave the town.

This she refused to do, and as the weary weeks went by she had to learn the bitter lesson that Harold Courtenay was not the man to risk the loss of pleasure and profit for the sake of the girl he had taught to love him.

They met but seldom and when they did his mind was full of his racing stud and his chance of winning a race at the spring meeting. He talked a great deal of horses, very little of love, and spoke not a word of marriage.

The day of the Crawford races came round and it found Lenore a heart-broken woman. All the youth, gaiety, and warmth of her nature had been crushed out of her in those bitter winter days of neglect, calumny and solitude.

She had seen Harold several times lately in the town with Kathleen Bryce and for some weeks even his letters had been discontinued. She had a fancy to see him ride and with some difficulty secured a place near the winning-post.

She was in the act of starting for the course when a smart dog-cart rattled down the street. Attracted by a strong impulse she looked up as it passed. The occupants were Harold Courtenay and Kathleen Bryce, the latter wearing his racing colours, and he let his eyes rest on Lenore without a sign of recognition.

She turned back quickly and ran up to her room. Her face was a shade paler and her lips more tightly compressed when she finally set out to take her place betimes.

The Courtenay-Bryce party were on a coach and Lenore hardly took her eyes off them. She noted jealously every look and smile that passed between Harold and Kathleen, with the morbid seeking for suffering that some natures cannot resist.

The great race of the day began, and public enthusiasm ran high in favour of young Courtenay, whose horse, bearing the gruesome name of "Sudden Death" romped in after an exciting contest. The winner was acclaimed from all sides, and for a second Lenore felt his eye rest upon her, but with no loving glance, rather a look of annoyance.

He turned his head quickly and was just in time to catch a rose that Kathleen threw from the box seat of the coach. As he pressed it to his lips Lenore rose to her feet, whipped her revolver from her side and took a rapid but accurate aim.

The sharp report was followed by a cry of horror from the by-standers as the hero of the hour flung up his hands and dropped, shot through the heart.

In the momentary confusion that ensued Lenore dashed to the side of the murdered man and flung herself on his body. The police removed her by force, her reason had given away at last, and she babbled wildly as she went, pointing to the riderless horse that stood as it were watching his dead master:

"Ah, Sudden Death! Sudden Death! The best thing! She won't have him now! He is mine! Sudden death! He is mine!"

MARY FERMOR.

TWENTY-SEVEN SEALED ENVELOPES CLAIMED.

£270 ALREADY PAID.

THE Editor of *Pearson's Weekly* has sent out fifty men, each with a sealed envelope containing a letter entitling the recipient to the sum of £10. To secure one of these envelopes it is only necessary to ask one of the Ten-Pound Men the question, "Have you got that Ten-Pound Note?" and at the same time to show a current copy of *Pearson's Weekly*. Full details of the scheme will be sent on application to Room 36, Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

In order that ladies may have an extra opportunity of sharing in this great *Pearson's Weekly* scheme,

TEN TEN-POUND LADIES

have been dispatched all over the country, each of whom will deliver up the Sealed Envelope to the lady who fulfills the conditions mentioned in *Pearson's Weekly*. No gentlemen need apply.

The latest song, "Have You Got That Ten-Pound Note?" is being sung every night by Mr. R. G. Knowles in various London music-halls with great success.

HOW TO GET A COPY OF THE SONG.

Copies of the song are now ready, and may be obtained from all music-sellers and newsagents for 1s. 4d., or direct from the Song Department, Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C., for 1s. 6d. Postal Order (not stamps) post free. If your newsagent or music-seller has no copies he can get one for you if he likes. Already hundreds of orders have been received, and these will, of course, be dealt with in rotation.

Full particulars of the scheme will be found each week in *Pearson's Weekly*, and fresh developments appear in the *Daily Express* every day.

The following are the names and addresses of the winners of Ten-Pound Notes up to the time of going to press:

H. E. Baker, 4 Beaconsfield Road, Magdalen Road, Norwich; John Lotan, 23 St. Anne's Chambers, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C.; Charles Lee, 1 Agnes Terrace, St. Mary's Avenue, Southend; Charles Wright, 30 Oxford Gardens, North Kensington; Robert Gantier, 132 Clarence Road, Wimbledon; W. W. Tonkin, 5 Grove Road, Brixton, S.W.; E. G. Baldock, 68 Portland Street, Lincoln; Arthur Wellings, 12 The Forgate, Worcester; A. Bowman, 413 City Road, London, E.C.; John Roe, Hatfield Road Board School, St. Albans; R. J. Martyn, 4 Albert Road, Morice Town, Devonport; Mr. W. H. Hole, Stationmaster, Teignmouth; Archibald Brown, Market Place, Carluke; J. D. Southall, 38 Rosebery Gardens, Crouch End; W. Cotton, Coxbridge, West Pennard, Glastonbury; W. H. Wayne, 19 Hurstfinch Road, St. Helens; May Grammer, 154 Elgin Avenue, Maida Vale; Albert J. Page, Sawbridgeworth, Herts; Mrs. F. Pezaro, 86 High Street, Kingsland, N.; James I. W. Ash, 34 Cricketfield Road, Hackney Downs; Mrs. S. Fitzpatrick, 13 Killarney Parade, Dublin; Miss Winifred Eldridge, 337 Seaside, Eastbourne; Charles W. Ward, 30 Milton Street, Maidstone; Albert House, 8 Lansdowne Terrace, Holloway Street, Exeter; George Tyler, 35 Cattle Market, Loughborough; Miss Annie Hamilton, 12 Blythswood Drive, Glasgow; Mrs. Redgrave, 14 Burnley Road, Stockwell.

The original Sealed Envelopes by which claims have been made can be seen at the following places:

Mr. John Lotan's, Ludgate Hill Station; Mr. H. E. Baker's, offices of *Eastern Daily Press*, Norwich; Inspector Lee's, Cooper Brothers, Cliff Town Road, Southend; Mr. C. Wright's, Crown Hotel, Southampton; Mr. W. W. Tonkin's, Lang Sims, 437 Brixton Road, London, S.W.; Mr. E. G. Baldock's, Clifford Thomas, 202 High Street, Lincoln; Mr. Arthur Wellings', Mr. Large, The Forgate, Worcester; Mr. A. Bowman's, 413 City Road, E.C.; Mr. John Roe's, Mr. W. H. Richardson, 5 High Street, St. Albans; Miss May Grammer's, Mr. Burge, chemist, 123 Shirland Road, Paddington; Mr. Southall's, Seagrief and Sons, Broadway, Crouch End; Mr. Brown's, John Young, bookseller, High Street, Carluke; Mrs. Pezaro's, 86 High Street, Kingsland; Mrs. Page's, Truswell and Sons, Sawbridgeworth; Mr. Ash's, "Three Sisters," Queensdown Road, Hackney Downs; Mrs. Fitzpatrick's, 81 Lower Dorset Street, Dublin; Miss Eldridge, 337 Seaside, Eastbourne; Mr. Ward's, Walter Ruck, stationer, High Street, Maidstone.

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THE CLOCK.

THERE was at Epinal in 1600 or 1700 and something—it is so long ago that I do not remember the exact date—a clock with chimes, music and moving figures that excited the admiration of all the neighbouring towns.

From Vesoul, Chaumont, Nancy, and even Strasburg, from the four cardinal points, in fact, flocked inquisitive men and women, who, at the approach of midday, crowded into the back shop of old Master Tiphaine, the ingenious constructor of this complicated machine.

Master Tiphaine had never consented to part with his masterpiece; to the offers of honours and money, a hundred times repeated, he gave formal refusals, saying:

"My native town will inherit it after my death. If you took away my clock now you would kill me, you see, for it is a part of my life."

Master Tiphaine did not exaggerate; for long years, absorbed in the most impossible calculations, he had conceived and thought out his plan of mechanism; in fact, it took ten years before his project was realised.

He made all the pieces himself, and fitted them together patiently after a thousand fruitless trials—oh, how many sleepless nights, how many hidden discouragements!—until he attained finally the certainty of triumph. Indeed, Master Tiphaine did not exaggerate in claiming that this clock was a part of his life.

One day, then, the inhabitants of Epinal learnt that the old clockmaker had solved his problem, and that they were summoned to assure themselves of the perfect working of the apparatus.

They took care not to miss the appointment. They admired very much the construction of the machine, but when at the stroke of twelve the mechanism set in motion the figures, men-at-arms, heralds, apostles, etc.; when the chimes rang, mysterious bells played a popular air, the cock crowed, the ox bellowed, the ass began to bray, and the fat goose to utter his hoarse cry—due, as everyone knows, to a cold contracted by an ancestor on Christmas night—there was a wild admiration, an irresistible enthusiasm among the spectators.

"Once more!" they called out.

"I cannot oblige you," replied Master Tiphaine, "the machinery is arranged to work only every twenty-four hours. If I disturb the least thing the whole is deranged, and I am too old to recommence such labours. Come back to-morrow!"

On the next day the sightseers came in still greater numbers. Then the news spread, reached the country and the neighbouring towns. Every day the back shop was filled with admirers who were untiring in applauding the masterpiece of Severien Tiphaine.

But for some years Master Tiphaine had remained indifferent to the sincerest and the loudest praises. In the confused din of exclamations he listened only to the laugh of a child, a clear laugh, joyous and fresh as the chant of a mountain cascade, purer and more melodious than the mysterious bells that sang in the clock. Among all the faces that bent towards him gaping with surprise, Tiphaine observed only the pink and white cheeks of Guillemine, a pretty little child of five years of age, his grand-daughter.

Guillemine did not miss one of the midday representations. Master Tiphaine installed her in the first row, then he raised the curtain that protected his clock. From this moment all his attention was directed to his grand-daughter.

With as much impatience as the child he counted the tickings, he awaited the preliminary clicks. Immovable, in a state of ecstacy, Guillemine fixed her wide-opened, blue eyes on the clock.

Click! click! f-r-r-r-ou!

Gearings, springs, cogwheels began to move with a noise like the flapping of wings.

Master Tiphaine read on Guillemine's face the emotions that pervaded it, and he felt a childish joy.

Coo-coo-ricoo! the cock arose on the top of the belfry.

Guillemine clasped her hands. The bells tingled, and the infant Saviour, lying in the manger, appeared. There was the ox, the ass, and the fat goose. Higher up angels hovered in the clouds, which the dove, carrying the olive branch, flew across. The magi, the shepherds, followed by their bleating flocks, filed by in procession.

Guillemine began to fidget on her stool; she bit her lips, pulled her fingers; Master Tiphaine himself is restless; like the little girl he is he awaited the surprise.

There it is! The temptation of St. Anthony! The imps which dance about the friend that gambols, cavorts unceasingly. That was the surprise that Guillemine was waiting for. Wild with joy she jumped about, clapped her hands and laughed. Ah, this laugh! That was the surprise that Master Tiphaine waited for.

The old grandfather laughed in his turn; he laughed until he was ready to weep, and the procession ended as the cock rising again closed the entertainment with a crowning coo-coo-ricoo!

Master Tiphaine seized the little girl, shaking with laughter, clasped her in his arms, and mingled his snowy locks with the blonde ringlets of Guillemine.

One cold day in December, the sightseers of Epinal, who, in spite of the cold, came to the shop of the master clockmaker as punctually as certain citizens of Paris, not long ago, used to go to the Palais Royal to regulate their watches by the report of the cannon, found the door obstructed by old Severien Tiphaine.

"No one can come in to-day," said he, sadly.

"Why?" they asked. "Is the clock broken?"

"The clock is not broken," replied Tiphaine in a still sadder tone; "but Guillemine is ill, poor little one,

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and we are expecting the doctor, who ought to be here soon; so then I ask you please to go away without noise."

They acceded to his request, made their excuses and withdrew. Master Tiphaine then entered a room with closed shutters, lit up by a few burning faggots. At the end of this room in an alcove, where the fantastic shadows danced about, there was a white bed, and in that white bed, quite pale and delicate, Guillemine was lying.

At the foot of the bed a young man and a young woman were standing, looking sadly at the little girl. Master Tiphaine advanced with soft steps, trying to prevent the floor from creaking under his weight, and when he was quite near the bed he said, addressing the young man:

"Well, my son, has she spoken?"

"No; she has not. She does not seem to hear when she is spoken to, and yet she looks at us with her beautiful blue eyes."

"Father," said the young woman, "I am frightened, for our Guillemine is like a dead person, lying with the eyes wide open."

Master Tiphaine bent over the couch, and trying to smile.

"Guillemine," said he, "little Guillemine."

The prostrate child fixed on him eyes that seemed to see no longer. She did not stir.

"Heaven have pity on us!" sighed Master Tiphaine, drawing aside.

Poor, gentle Guillemine!

On the previous day, a little after the midday representation, a high fever had seized her. During a part of the night she had been delirious, crying out and struggling against invisible beings and since morning she had remained in this state of alarming torpor, her limbs stiffened, her eyes staring.

Master Tiphaine looked at the lips of Guillemine, those poor, pale lips, from which only yesterday the melody of laughter escaped.

There was a knock at the door. Tiphaine went to lift the latch.

An old man entered.

"Guillemine," said Master Tiphaine, "here is the doctor, who has come to pay you a visit."

The doctor examined the child and meditated a long time.

"Well," said Master Tiphaine.

The doctor shook his head with an anxious air.

"It is serious, very serious," he said.

The young man hearing these words made a sign to the young woman, and went out.

"What is to be done?" asked Tiphaine.

"Above all, she must be roused from this fatal torpor. It is this prostration that makes me uneasy. Now, then, try to divert her, rouse her up, otherwise, I can answer for nothing."

Thereupon the doctor went away. Then the young woman sat down near Guillemine and, repressing her sobs, sang an old roundelay that used to please the child; but Guillemine's eyes showed that she did not hear.

"What is to be done? What is to be done?" sobbed the young woman, and she began her song again.

Hours passed, Guillemine became more and more pale on the white pillows. Afflicted, hopeless, Tiphaine, the young man and the young woman became silent now, and all was still in the room. Suddenly a rythmical noise was heard.

Tick, tock, tick, tock!

Master Tiphaine knit his eyebrows, and relapsed into a profound meditation. Abruptly he arose and went towards his son.

"Help me to roll Guillemine's bed up in front of the clock," said he.

"What do you want to do?" asked the young man.

"You will see."

They rolled the bed into the back shop, and placed it before the clock. Master Tiphaine raised the curtain that covered the masterpiece. The clock appeared. Guillemine's eyes seemed to move.

"Look closely now, Guillemine! You are going to see the manger and the wise kings and St. Anthony. How you are going to laugh!"

"But, father," said the young man, "it is eleven o'clock at night, and the figures will not appear until noon to-morrow. Can Guillemine wait until then?"

"She shall not wait," replied Master Tiphaine, in a low tone, "and the figures are going to appear."

"But," said the young man, turning pale, "you can only bring about such a result by breaking up the mechanism."

"Yes, that is true."

"Father, this is your life work——"

Master Tiphaine motioned to his son to be silent.

"Bring me a light," he said.

He then drew out nails, screws, plates, laying bare the systems of wheels, and springs. Tiphaine worked slowly, for his hands trembled a little.

"Give me the hammer," he said suddenly.

Armed with the hammer he was about to strike a blow, then stopped. Was he hesitating? He looked at Guillemine, who was staring fixedly at the clock.

"Pay attention, my Guillemine. Now you are going to laugh. You will laugh, won't you?"

He struck a sharp blow. The machine seemed to groan. The spring unbent with a formidable humming, the gearing rolled round. Master Tiphaine threw the hammer far from him, and staggering, had to lean against the wall.

"Light up the clock now," said he to his son, "and look, my Guillemine!"

The hands turned wildly. There came the cock, the men-at-arms, there was the ox, the hoarse, fat goose, and the bells tingled and the chimes rang out.

Guillemine had raised her head, her lips partly opened as if in hesitating prelude to laughter.

Ah, there is St. Anthony, who, quicker than ever, runs along, dragged by his friend with extraordinary gambolings, and the imps, and St. Anthony and the wise men and the shepherds danced a frantic round to the hurrying sounds of the chimes and the bells.

At last the hesitating laugh of Guillemine rose by degrees, ascending like a song of reviving life, and finally breaking forth clear and radiant.

But while she, the gentle, little girl, was thus reviving to new life the poor clock was in its last agony. Sinister cracking, like a death rattle, from which Master Tiphaine suffered horribly, shook its frame.

In order not to hear these final moans Tiphaine listened to the laughter of the child. Once more a prolonged cracking, a last effort of the machinery, and then all was over; the clock lived no longer; but Guillemine was laughing still.

And so, when this famous clock was shown some years ago at Epinal, it was said—on the authority of competent persons who had studied the mutilated mechanism—that the masterpiece of Severien Tiphaine was a failure and had never worked.

ANNA SHORT.

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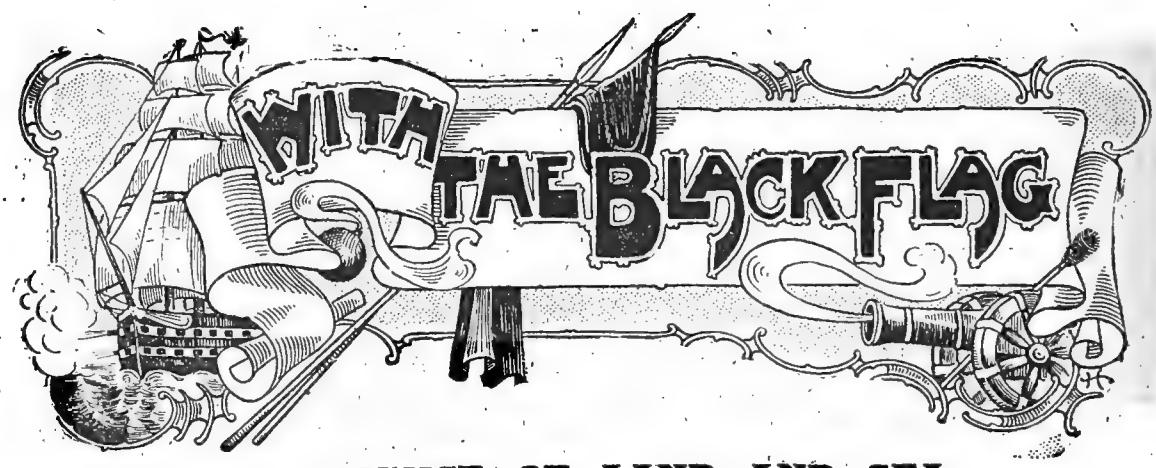

A ROMANCE OF LAND AND SEA.

By WILLIAM WESTALL.

Author of "With the Red Eagle," "The Phantom City," "Nigel Fortescue," etc., etc.

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS.

Major Wyvenhoe, commander of an expedition which went out from England to help the Venezuelans in their struggle for liberty.

Captain Cautley, who is in charge of the ship which took the expedition out.

John Ready, the servant of Wyvenhoe.

General Arismendez, ex-Governor of Pampatar and Vice-President of the Venezuelan Republic.

Don Iago Santleo, and Antonio Bonanza, two Venezuelans who are friends of Wyvenhoe.

General Urdenetta, Governor of Pampatar, a bitter enemy of Wyvenhoe.

Bolivar, Supreme Chief of the Venezuelan Republic.

Tamanac, an Indian Cazique, and great friend of Santleo.

CHAPTER XVII.

Calabozo is Taken.

On the day after my interview with Bolivar and Urdenetta intelligence reached headquarters that the Spaniards were making ready to evacuate Calabozo, on which the Chief decided to storm the town at midnight, and preparations to that end were straightway made.

The plan of attack was simple and seemed feasible. While a picked body of infantry attacked the south, east, and west sides, General Paez and his llaneros were to ride round to the north and hinder the enemy from retreating in that direction, if they should attempt to retreat.

As the walls were low and the barriers weak, and the Spaniards, besides having no other artillery than a few light field-pieces, were numerically inferior, no great difficulty was anticipated in scaling the ramparts and forcing the gates. Moreover, as they were not expecting an attack they would be taken by surprise and probably offer only a feeble resistance.

So at least the Chief thought and his officers hoped. To me, personally, he was as courteous as usual, and seemed not to have taken offence at my refusal of Urdenetta's embrace, perhaps because he had need of my services. Be that as it might, he kept me so fully occupied that I had no opportunity of speaking to Don Iago (whose battalion formed part of the attacking force) until late in the day, and even then we were able to exchange only a few words.

In order to avoid alarming the enemy, great efforts were made to preserve silence, officers being forbidden to shout and privates to speak, and there was, of course, to be neither bugle sounding nor drum beating.

We had no moon, but the stars, shining brilliantly in a clear sky, did nearly as well.

At eleven o'clock, the three columns of attack being under arms and ready to advance, Paez and his horsemen started for the north gate But until he sent word that he had taken up the position assigned to him we were not to move.

Everything appeared to be going well; so far there had been no hitch and officers who had been sent to reconnoitre reported that a quietness as of death reigned in Calabozo.

"Caramba! I believe they are asleep," quoth one of them. "Don Simon has Morillo in the hollow of his hand."

"Yes, I think we have caught him napping this time, and if we destroy his army to-night there will be nothing to prevent our marching in triumph to Caracas," said Bolivar complacently.

"And a grateful people will crown their liberator with laurels," added the courtly officer.

"And also, I hope, my brave army which has deserved so well of the country, and then I shall sheathe my sword, resign my offices and retire into private life, happy in the thought that Venezuela is independent and free. But it is time we heard from General Paez. Ah, here comes a horseman, one of his aides, probably."

It was Bonanza who presently pulled up in front of Bolivar.

"What news, Captain?" he asked.

"Bad news, Señor General. Morillo has anticipated us, slipped away with the main body of his command, but Don José has attacked his rear-guard and will no doubt drive it back into Calabozo."

On this there followed the most startling outburst of oaths and exclamations I had ever heard. The names of all the saints in the calendar were taken in vain, millions of devils were invoked, and Morillo and the Gods were reviled from the crowns of their heads to the soles of their feet.

It was certainly very provoking and I shared in the general disappointment. Two hours, perhaps one hour, would have made all the difference. Had the head of the Spanish column been attacked as it emerged from the north gate nothing could have prevented the entire force from being dispersed or destroyed. Bolivar, with whom the fault lay, seemed vexed and mortified past speaking, but presently

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recovering his equanimity, stilled the storm by ordering an immediate advance.

It was not necessary to scale the walls, the gates were opened from within, and after a short, albeit sharp struggle, the Spanish rear-guard, composed chiefly of Creoles and half-breeds, laid down their arms and sued for mercy. Some were bayonetted, and had not the Chief ordered the survivors, numbering about eight hundred, to be spared, and imprisoned in the churches, all would have been summarily dispatched.

Then the town was sacked, as a matter of course, though fewer excesses were committed than might have been expected, considering the character and composition of the patriot army, and the Chief having determined to follow Morillo and bring him to an engagement, we marched northwards on the following afternoon leaving in the town a strong guard under the command of Captain Sherwood. When we were *en route* Bolivar mentioned that he was making yet another attempt to induce the Spanish general to consent to an exchange of prisoners.

Tovas dismounted, and using a drumhead as a desk, prepared to write.

"It would be very well if you could, but won't your envoy be treated as Bonanza was treated?" said I, fearing that he was going to send Don Antonio a second time.

"I shall send no more flags of truce, Señor Wyvenhoe. Early this morning I released twelve of the officers and twenty of the privates whom we took last night, and sent them to Morillo with a letter requesting him for the last time, in the name of civilisation and humanity, to agree to an exchange."

"You released these people without conditions?"

"Without conditions, just in order to show Morillo that I am in earnest, and shall faithfully carry out any agreement to which we may come."

"You have acted nobly, Señor General, and I cannot think that Morillo will refuse a proposal so well meant and so handsomely made," I said warmly, for I felt that he had done the right thing.

"We shall see. Urdenetta and the other generals were all against it, and I have promised, if it fails, to let them for the future deal with captured Godos as they think fit. Had I not been very determined, they would have killed every prisoner in Calabozo before we left."

I confess that Don Simon puzzled me. I knew that he had been, and could be, both wantonly cruel and basely treacherous; yet here he was doing his utmost, in spite of his generals, to put an end to the system of reprisals which had so long prevailed, at a moment, too, when, having more prisoners than the enemy, he would lose by the exchange. He was so strange a compound of good and bad qualities that I could not be sure whether he was acting out of policy or humanity, but I thought then, and I think still, that humanity and a desire to stand well in the opinion of the civilised world, were his predominant motives.

Moreover, his manner to me was so friendly and sympathetic that I began to think I had wronged him in my mind, that he had either forgotten or forgiven my feud with Urdenetta and cherished no evil designs against me. Nevertheless I had my doubts, for I had been warned by one who knew him better than I did that those whom Bolivar disliked had most to fear when he was the most kind.

Towards evening, when we were within a league of Rastro, whither the royalists had retreated, the advanced guard came to a sudden halt, on which the Chief and his staff rode to the front to ascertain the cause of the stoppage.

"What is it, what has happened?" he demanded of General Zaraza, who commanded the advanced guard.

"Look!" answered Zaraza sternly.

Across the road, before the head of the column, were lying, stiff and stark, twelve patriot officers and twenty privates, prisoners taken from us by the Spaniards, all with their skulls split or their throats cut.

It was Morillo's answer to Bolivar's overtures. The only exchange to which he would consent was an exchange of dead rebels for living royalists.

"What do you think of this, Major Wyvenhoe?" exclaimed Don Simon indignantly. "I have known, ever since we first conversed on the subject, I have inferred it from your manner, read it in your face, that you deem us no less cruel than the Spaniards, that if we renounced reprisals so would they, and as you think, so think our enemies and, I daresay, some of our friends in Europe and the United States. Well, I have tried, not for the first time, honestly and generously, to make a beginning, and this is the way in which I am met. I shall try no more, and in murdering these thirty-two poor fellows, Morillo has sealed the fate of the eight hundred prisoners we took last night. You have writing materials, Captain Tovas" (one

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After being told to report myself to Urdenetta and join my regiment I took my leave.

of his aides.) Tovas, knowing what was expected of him, dismounted, and using a drum head as a desk, prepared to write and the Chief dictated a peremptory order to Captain Sherwood for the immediate execution of every royalist prisoner in Calabozo.

"Now," said he, when he had signed it, "shift your saddle to one of the led horses, ride back to Calabozo, and see for yourself that the order is obeyed. The scouts report that the Godos are continuing their retreat. You will find us at Rastro, where we shall halt for the night."

This incident made a deep impression on the troops. Before time the Spaniards had returned evil for evil, now they returned evil for good; accommodation or truce with enemies so truculent and ferocious was hopeless and would never again be attempted. More than ever it was war to the knife, all vowed vengeance and so incensed were the men that after a short rest they wanted to go on.

Bolivar being nothing loth we followed on the tracks of the flying royalists throughout the long night and the next day's heat with scarce a halt, except where we came to water, when the men would rest a few minutes, quench their thirst, take a bite of something, and then of their own accord rise and resume their usual swinging pace with all the fierce resolution of Indians on the war path, and most of them were more or less Indians.

We found Morillo's army posted in a wood near Sombrero, and there followed a short, yet sanguinary and indecisive engagement; for, though our fellows fought resolutely, there is a limit to human endurance; and when the Spaniards, who had been resting while we were marching, again fell back, we had to forego pursuit, the foot-soldiers being worn out and the cavalry horses so used up that they could hardly move, much less carry their riders into action.

A rapid pursuit is only a degree less demoralising than a retreat. Many of the men, overcome by the heat, had fallen out, all were footsore, many of the horses lame, and the pack mules, the reserve ammunition, and other supplies toiling miles in the rear. A long rest was absolutely necessary, and, despite the Chief's desire to push on, two days passed before we were able to make another move.

During the halt two things happened, one of which augured ill for the army, the other for myself.

On the ground that his cavalry would be of no use in the hill country, whither Bolivar proposed to follow Morillo, General Paez declined to go further; also, he gave the Chief some good advice, which it would have been well if he had followed, saying that in the level country the superiority of the patriot cavalry generally decided the day, whereas among the mountains, where horsemen were helpless, the numbers and better discipline of the royalist infantry would give them the advantage and insure them the victory.

"That is why Morillo keeps retreating," added Don José, "and instead of following and fighting him on ground of his own choosing you would do better to fall back and bring him to a decisive engagement on ground of your choosing. Anyhow, my fellows won't leave the llanos, where they are invincible, to be massacred in some mountain pass."

But to this sage counsel Bolivar would not listen, and when he asked my advice and I sided with Paez he seemed very angry, and it was probably the reason why he chose that particular time for dismissing me from his staff and appointing me to the command of the Cazadores of the Apure, a regiment of Urdenetta's division, though I have no doubt the measure had already been decided on and would have taken place in any case.

True, I got a step in rank, but as I told the Chief I would rather serve under him as major than under Urdenetta as colonel.

"You think the general will annoy you, but he won't, and you have only to apologise for your rudeness to be on the best of terms with him," was the answer.

"When General Urdenetta apologises for putting me under arrest at Margarita I will make the *amende honorable* by accepting his embrace," I rejoined.

"I might order you to apologise. However I won't do that, the apology would not be sincere. All the same you will be expected to obey the general's orders, and do your duty as if you and he were the best of friends."

"So long as I remain in the service, general, you may be assured that I shall do my duty."

"So long as you remain in the service! Allow me to remind you, Señor Colonel, that your remaining in the service depends on my pleasure, not on yours."

This meant, of course, that my resignation, if I tendered it, would not be accepted.

"Unless you are released from it by death, for I am sure you would not desert to the enemy," added Bolivar after a moment's pause, at the same time giving me one of his suspicious side glances.

"Desert to the enemy," I exclaimed hotly. "Do you really suppose——"

"Oh, don't be angry. Of course you are quite incapable of entertaining any such idea, and I should be very sorry if from any cause whatever, we were to lose your services, which are highly appreciated, as well by Urdenetta as myself."

"I thank you for your good opinion, Señor General, and you would add to the obligation by informing me who has dared to suggest that I am capable of such infamy as desertion to the enemy."

"It has not been suggested, only as you know, Morillo is offering inducements to the foreign officers in my army to take service in his, and all I meant to say was that whatever anybody else might do you would never betray the cause to which you have sworn allegiance. Perhaps I did not lay sufficient emphasis on the 'you.'"

He had laid no emphasis on it at all, and I felt sure that, believing I might desert to the Spaniards out of revenge for the way in which he was treating me, and to avoid serving under my enemy, he had made the remark as a feeler.

The warmth with which I took it probably surprised him and to make amends he remarked with a smile:

"I thought I was paying you a compliment."

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"As you are good enough to say so I accept it in that sense, nevertheless it is a compliment which I had rather been spared," I replied, and after being told to report myself to Urdenetta and join my regiment took my leave.

The rupture with Bolivar was complete. I had served him faithfully, often at the hazard of my life, without pay or expectation of reward, yet he had deliberately and of malice aforethought inflicted on me the greatest humiliation in his power, for I know of none greater than being compelled to serve a man whom you hate and despise. So keenly, indeed, did I feel it that I was only restrained from refusing the so-called promotion and offering my resignation by the certainty that the doing so would render my second condition worse than my first.

I should not better myself by being tried by court-martial on a charge of insubordination, separated from my friends, and sentenced to a term of imprisonment in some noisome prison, there, in all probability, to perish of privation and disease.

So I pocketed the affront and waited on Urdenetta, who received me with formal politeness; but his eyes bespoke enmity, and I knew as well as though he had said it in so many words that he would do me an ill turn if he could. His speech on introducing me to my regiment was brief and to the point: "Your new colonel, Don Ruperto Wyvenhoe."

The Cazadores of the Apure were of various breeds, sizes, and colours, altogether a very mixed lot and only half clad, yet a fair sample of the bulk of the army; but since I had seen how they could march and fight, my respect for the patriot levies had increased, and better disciplined, armed, and led, they would have been a match for Morillo's choicest troops. Even to their lack of garments, grotesque though it made them look, I had become reconciled. In countries where it is always warm, clothing is superfluous and other things being equal, an army that requires neither shirts nor shoes has a distinct advantage over armies that require both.

Don Iago's battalion of blacks formed part of Urdenetta's division, and it was a great satisfaction to have my old friend for a comrade; in certain eventualities it might be a great help. But Bonanza remained with General Paez. We parted with regret and many expressions of mutual esteem, as also of hopes that we might meet again, though for my part, I doubted whether they would be realised.

Bonanza, like Santleo, took a serious view of my breach with Bolivar and my strained relations with Urdenetta.

"It is bad enough to lose the Chief's favour and protection, but it is a great deal worse to be handed over to the tender mercies of your enemy, and such an enemy as Urdenetta. Not that he is likely to worry you in small matters. Men of his stamp don't tease their victims, they destroy them, and nothing is more certain than that he has resolved on your destruction. In what shape the stroke will come, nobody knows, I don't suppose he knows himself, and against an unknown danger it is impossible to guard. However, you seem, like myself, to have a good many lives," added Bonanza, with one of his merry laughs, "and I have not the least doubt that with the help of Don Iago and your patron saint, you will escape this peril as you have escaped many others. Keep up your spirits, and if by any chance you get the ruffian in your power, don't spare him."

This, albeit well meant, was not comforting, yet I did not let Don Antonio's forebodings disquiet me, preferring rather to follow his advice by keeping up my spirits.

I made the best d'spositions I could, and led my men on.

Tamanac remained with Don Iago, who continued to treat him as an honoured guest, found him a horse and gave him a lance, both of which the Cazique knew how to use. He was also a fine archer, and an unerring rifle shot, and could throw the lasso as well as a llanero.

When I asked Santleo again whether Tamanac had brought good news he said, "Yes," but in a tone which signified that it was not quite so good as he had expected, and I inferred from one or two rather enigmatical remarks which he let drop that he had some intention either of resigning his commission or applying for leave of absence, with what object he did not say, though it could only be that he might return to his own people. But as we were beginning what was virtually a new campaign Bolivar would grant leave of absence to none of his officers, much less accept resignations.

Since leaving Sombrero we had not come in contact with the enemy, but it was known that between us and Caracas were two armies, one led by Morillo, the other by his second in command, General La Torre. Bolivar's plan was to get between them and, while La Torre was held in check by the cavalry under Zaraza and Zedeño, fall on Morillo with his infantry. The better and more rapidly to carry out this scheme, our division was ordered to proceed by another road and rejoin the main body at a point further north, which had been agreed upon by Bolivar and Urdenetta, with whom, of course, went Don Iago and myself.

We set out after siesta—the heat of the day being always passed in sleep, bivouacked on the banks of a meandering stream, and resumed our march an hour before sunrise on

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the following morning. So far we had met with no opposition, every village we passed was deserted, either because for their lives, or in obedience to orders from Caracas. This, and seeing nothing of the enemy, made our leaders, who always trusted a good deal to Providence, more careless than was their wont, the most obvious precautions were neglected, and we went on as confidently and as little apprehensive of danger as though there was not a Spaniard in the land.

After marching some three hours we entered a quebrada, neither very narrow nor very steep, yet still in military parlance a defile, whose sloping sides were partly under cultivation, partly timbered. On the bluff at the north end of this defile was a large village overlooking the road, parallel to which ran the bed of a wide though almost dry river.

Here General Urdenetta decided to halt for breakfast,

Urdenetta's orderly entered the patio and handed me a letter.

without, however, sending a single horseman to reconnoitre or attempting in any way to ascertain whether the place was occupied or deserted, the inhabitants friendly or hostile. The advanced guard, a squadron of cavalry, went on laughing and singing, closely followed by a battalion whose unloaded muskets were slung across their shoulders, and were entering the village when a hot fire was opened on them by invisible foes.

Many of the dragoons were killed and their horses wounded, and the panic-stricken survivors wheeling round, dashed among the infantry in the rear, thereby throwing the entire column into confusion. Had the Spaniards charged, there would have been a regular *sauve qui peut*. Fortunately, they did not; in a few minutes the fugitives were rallied and order restored, and Urdenetta ordered the Cazadores to take the village at the point of the bayonet, which was more easily said than done, the Spaniards being posted in the houses and behind the bushes and trees.

However, I made the best dispositions I could and led my men on.

They responded to my call and showed a good deal of courage, but it was too much of a passive order. Though they were exposed to a murderous fire to which they could make no effective reply I could not induce them to make a rush for it. How I escaped Heaven only knows. Two horses were shot under me within ten minutes, one bullet carried away a spur, another grazed my cheek, a third my sword arm.

It was too hot to last, the men began to waver, retreating step by step, and finally broke and fled, though if we had been properly supported I think we should have won, and so I told the general when he reproached me with what he was pleased to call my failure.

His face bespoke both anger and disappointment, and I thought that his annoyance was due in a great measure to my not having been killed.

Urdenetta had neither received a military training nor possessed military aptitude, but he well knew that unless the village were taken we should be unable to rejoin Bolivar, in which event Bolivar's plan of campaign would be ruined and, probably, his army destroyed.

"The position must be carried, cost what it may. You have seen more of it than anybody else. What would you advise?" he asked me.

"Attack in front as before, and at the same time threaten the enemy's rear by sending a strong detachment along the bed of the river. The Spaniards are in no great strength, and the chances are that when they see the position is going to be turned they will retreat."

"Why did you not suggest that before?"

"Because when his general gives a peremptory order it is an officer's duty to obey it without either making remarks or offering suggestions, and if I had done otherwise I should rightly have incurred your displeasure."

Urdenetta replied with a scowl and a muttered curse, yet condescended to act on my advice, with the result I had anticipated. So soon as the Spaniards saw they were in danger of being outflanked they cleared out, but our weakness in cavalry both in quality and numbers forbade pursuit.

Most of the young men belonging to the village went off with the troops; all who remained, both old and young, were, by Urdenetta's orders, imprisoned in the church. Very little information could be got out of them, only that a regiment had come the night before from the direction of Maracay and taken possession of the village.

As we were well up to time and for some reason best known to himself the general wanted to make a long march on the following day it was decided that we should pass the night where we were, and together with Santleo and several other officers I was quartered in a house with a spacious patio and verandah.

Here we lunched, for it was long past breakfast time, and John Ready, who was an admirable caterer, provided us with the best meal we had enjoyed for a long while. We had coffee, arepas (hot maize cakes) chicken broth, roast monkey and several bottles of wine which John had found hidden under a pile of rubbish in the cellar.

After luncheon we prepared to indulge in a siesta and I had just lighted a cigar and betaken myself to a hammock when Urdenetta's orderly entered the patio and handed me a letter which I opened with languid curiosity, little thinking that it would alter the course of my whole life.

Thus the letter ran:

The general has decided that all the prisoners are to be shot. The execution is to take place in an hour, and the firing party, a detachment of the Cazadores of the Apure, will be commanded by Colonel Wyvenhoe.

URDENETTA.

"I think there is some mistake. I shall go with you to headquarters and have it rectified," I remarked to the orderly who was waiting for an answer.

Then I showed the letter to Don Iago, saying *sotto voce*, in English, "I shall refuse, of course, and if I do not return you will know that I have been put under arrest."

"And if you are put under arrest you will be condemned to death; but die you shall not, rather will I kill Urdenetta with my own hand," replied Santleo in a fierce whisper.

(To be continued.)

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SHORT STORIES ABOUT DUSTMEN.

We devote, every week, two pages of *Short Stories* to pithy, humourous anecdotes similar to those which appear in these columns. A prize of £1 1s. will be sent to the reader who submits the best storyette this week, and a copy of "Tandra," by Andrew Quantock, to each of those whose attempts are used. The anecdotes may be either original or selected; in the latter case the source *must* be stated. The prize of One Guinea offered for the best Storyette in this competition has been won this week by Mr. J. D. Watts, "Kildare," Lower Edmonton. Attempts this week must deal with Stories about BABIES, and must reach the Storyette Editor, *Short Stories* Office, Henrietta Street, Strand, London, W.C., by Monday, October 22nd. Post-cards only, please.

Good Wine Needs No Bush.

Two dustmen, who had been lucky enough to discover a sovereign in their load of dust, decided to wet the find, and accordingly repaired to the nearest pub.

They decided to have something good to celebrate such an auspicious occasion, so Bill called the barmaid, and asked for "a bottle o' that stuff, like wot the swells drink. Port, ain't it?"

She served them with a bottle, which they proceeded to empty, with very wry faces.

"Rum tastin' stuff, ain't it?" said one.

"Yes; an' wot a funny colour! S'pose we try another," said Bill.

"'Ere, guv'ner!" to the proprietor, who had just come into the bar, "let's 'ave another o' them bottles o' port."

"Who served you with the first one?" asked the boss.

"Why, the barmaid," said Bill.

"Where did you get that bottle of port you served just now?" asked the proprietor of the girl.

"At the end of the first shelf," answered the girl.

"Why," said the boss, "that was ketchup!"

J. D. W.

All She Wanted.

A DUSTMAN was one day passing by a block of flats with his cart. On one of the highest storeys he saw a woman gesticulating to him.

He wearily plodded up the intervening four storeys and at length reached the landing where the woman was standing, with a yelling urchin by her side.

To his disgust he was greeted with the following:

"I say, Mr. Dustman, isn't it right, that, if my little boy don't stop crying, you'll take him away with you in your cart?"

H. R.

Not Equal to the Occasion.

THERE is a dustman in London whose knowledge and use of strong language is the wonder of all who know him.

One day he was driving a waggon of refuse up a steep hill when the tailboard came out, and the rubbish rolled out down the slope.

The neighbours assembled, expecting to hear something more than usually choice.

After a brief interval of silence, the dustman mopped his forehead with his handkerchief and remarked:

"My friends, this is an occasion to which I am quite unequal."

W. J. B.

He Didn't Say "Thank You."

I WAS passing through a street near my home when my attention was drawn to two sweepers who were holding a strong argument with a gentleman whom they had accidentally bespattered with mud.

"What do you mean, you two dirty scoundrels, by sticking me up with mud?" said the gentleman, brandishing his umbrella in their faces.

"Beg yer pardin, sur, it was an accident," said one.

"Accident, be hanged," said the gentleman, "I can't go about like this with no brush to brush it off."

"If that's all yer want we'll oblige yer," and in less than two seconds the gentleman was being brushed down with the sweepers' brushes.

The gentleman struck out with his umbrella and went off up the street saying unkind things.

"Well, there's gratitoode for yer," said one sweeper.

"Ay, Bill," said the other, "he's forgotten to say 'Thank you, gentlemen.'"

J. W. V. H.

A *Lesson* in Carefulness.

SHUVLITUP, the dustman, called as usual one morning at the house of Mrs. Carefulone, and also, as usual, Mrs. C., who never tipped him, followed Shuvlitup out to the dust-bin in the backyard and watched every shovelful of ashes as he dug it out of the bin and threw it into his big bucket, to Shuvlitup's great indignation.

"You dustmen often find valuable articles in the dust-bins, don't you?" inquired Mrs. Carefulone, suspiciously.

"Well, mum," said Shuvlitup, "servants an' 'ousekeepers is orful keerless, not to say 'stravagant, an' we do find vallyble things in the ashes sometimes. Frinstance, larst time I was 'ere I found two cinders, three rags, an' a 'am bone wiv a bit o' meat on it. The cinders could 'ave bin burnt, the rags sold, an' the bone might 'ave bin boiled an' made a nice little basin of soop. You reely must be more keerful, mum."

W. J. O.

"Dusto."

AN Irishman was clearing the dustbin of a reverend gentleman the other day, when the cleric thought fit to address some remarks to him on his spiritual welfare.

"Do you ever think of the time when you must die, Pat?" asked the clergyman.

"Sure, and I do that," replied Pat, "for I often say to myself, 'Pat, my boy, you'll feel at home when you hear the parson say, 'Dust thou art, to dust thou must return.'"

A. E. K.

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A Natural Weakness.

THE dustman was on his daily rounds and happened to have got a new horse in his cart.

The lady of No. 9 was passing in, and noticed it; also that it frequently wagged its tail.

Full of curiosity—as ladies generally are—she asked the dustman for an explanation of this curious habit of his horse.

He didn't appear to be in an explanatory mood, and silently emptied the contents of the "bin" of No. 9 into his cart, and was passing on to the next house, when she repeated her query, remarking it was "so funny."

Looking back over his shoulder, the dustman said, with, maybe, a touch of sarcasm in his voice:

"Well, I dunno, mum, 'cept it's fur the same reason as ladies' tongues wag—a kind o' nat'ral weakness."

D. P. R.

Misplaced Sympathy.

WALKING up a suburban road recently, I saw a dustman take up a small photograph from the refuse in the cart, gaze at it intently, and then draw his arm across his eyes.

"Poor fellow!" I thought, and approached him. "Ah, my friend, beneath your rough exterior lies a noble nature. No doubt that photo has touched a tender chord in your heart to make you weep."

"Cord, guv'nor? I ain't got no cord in my 'eart or rope neither, an' I reckon you'd adverbially weep if an adjectival bit of ash got in your eye. As for this 'ere picture," indicating the photograph, which was of a small boy, "it ud take summat more 'n this ugly little kid to start me a snivelling."

E. C. L.

The Benefit of Education.

DONALD MORRISON was the only dustman employed by a village in the north of Scotland, and was generally reckoned as being somewhat "soft."

Early one morning he found a horse's shoe among some rubbish he was removing, and was examining it very closely, when the parish minister's son, a very conceited and forward youth, came sauntering along. Seeing the dustman examining the shoe, he said to him:

"What are you looking at that for, you silly?"

"I'm no' very sure what it is," answered Donald.

"Do you not know that that is a horse's shoe?"

"Eh, what?" said Donald; "it's guid tae hae learnin'; for I didna ken whether it cam' off a horse or a mare!"

J. C.

Why He Had the Wheelbarrow.

ONE Sunday morning recently a dustman, going up a street in Wigan, met another dustman dressed in his "Sunday suit" of black cloth; but pushing in front of him a heavy wheelbarrow, though it contained nothing in the shape of a cargo.

"Hello, Jack," said the first, "what are ta doing wi' t' barrow now?"

"Well," was the reply, "I've lost t' dog, and my chum Bill's away, and a chap looks such a fool walking out by hissel'."

He had taken the wheelbarrow for company.

H. C. G. S.

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1 Sunderland v. 2 Manchester City																			
1 Preston North End v. 2 Aston Villa																			
1 Stoke v. 2 Blackburn Rovers																			
1 West Bromwich Alb. v. 2 Notts Forest																			
1 Small Heath v. 2 Woolwich Arsenal																			
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6. It must be taken as a condition of the competition that anybody competing therein agrees to abide by the Editor's final decision.

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THE ✣ IRON ✣ IDOL.

THE nose of the big troopship was turned towards Old England as the mighty engines propelled her swiftly and powerfully through the water of the Arabian Sea. The brown-faced Fusiliers lay about the decks, chatting with their comrades or wives, playing with the children, or dozing away the hot afternoon.

Suddenly a commotion was heard below, men shouting in alarm.

"What the dickens is that?" exclaimed the ship's captain.

"Whatever is going on below there, Hamilton?" simultaneously cried the colonel of the Fusiliers to the adjutant. The answer came in an alarming manner.

Up from below rushed the sentry who had been posted at the door of the magazine. Round the waist he ran, eyes furious with baffled rage, thrusting with his fixed bayonet at some imaginary or invisible enemy which seemed to elude all his angry efforts to stab it. Round the waist he ran, back and forth, up the ladder on to the forecastle, down on to the waist again, up on to the quarter-deck, here, there, round and round, thrusting savagely with his bayonet, while the women and children ran shrieking hither and thither out of his way, and soldiers leapt aside as he came rushing towards them in pursuit of the invisible foe.

"He's mad!"

"No, he's drunk!"

"Who is it?"

"It's Jack Fann! Look out!"

"Trip him up! Knock him down! He'll kill somebody!"

"Chase him! Chase him!"

And now the infuriated sentry was once more rushing across the waist up on to the forecastle. Reaching the bows, he thrust his bayonet furiously at his invisible quarry, seemed, as ever, to miss it, dropped his rifle, and springing on the bows, clutched wildly at the eerie enemy, and before the foremost of the soldiers who in their turn were now pursuing him could grasp his ankle, leapt down into the sea and vanished for ever. All stood petrified, but only for an instant. Engines were reversed, buoys flung overboard, and boats lowered. But all to no purpose.

Private Fann had gone for ever from the roll of the Fusiliers.

"Mad, poor fellow!" was the universal verdict.

"And yet he was never in hospital for sunstroke, was he, Wilson?" asked the colonel.

"Never, colonel," replied the surgeon-major.

"It was like this, sir," said Sergeant Smith, in reply to the colonel's investigations into the strange affair. "Private Fann was sentry at the door of the magazine. He was posted at two o'clock and had been at his post an hour when he suddenly rushed into No. 7 Mess, seeming to be chasing something just like you saw him up here, sir. He ran about the mess for a minute or so and then rushed up on deck, and you saw the rest yourself, sir."

"Poor chap," said the colonel.

"Bob!" whispered Private Brodribb to Private Satan that night as they lay in adjoining hammocks.

"Yes, Sam."

"D'ye know what he was chasin'?"

"What who was chasin'?" asked Private Satan.

"Why, poor Jack, of course. Who else would I mean?"

"Well, who was he chasin' then? I didn't see nothin' to chase, any more'n anybody else. He was mad, wasn't he?"

"You fool! He was chasin' that beastly idol!"

"What!" cried Satan, springing up in his hammock.

"The iron idol!" repeated Brodribb, hoarsely.

"What d'ye mean?" gasped Satan, the darkness hiding his ashen face.

"What I say," replied Brodribb. "I knowed what it was as soon as I saw poor Jack rush into the mess, stabbin' at the air with his bay'net. Somethin' tole me what he was chasin'. I turned cold all over when I saw him lookin' so mad, stabbin' and thrustin' and runnin' and when I saw him rush up the ladder, I knowed what was goin' to happen. I knowed it was leadin' him to his death. I knowed it was drawin him overboard. And, mark me, Bob, it'll do the same to me yet, I feels it in my blood. I'm a doomed man, Bob, and so are you. D'ye remember what the yeller priest said about runnin' us to death? Oh—oh! why did I meddle with the beastly thing?" And Private Brodribb groaned aloud.

"Oh 'Eavens!" gasped Private Satan, fearfully. "I never thought of the idol. And now it'll be runnin' me to my death, too. Oh, dear! dear! I wish I never touched it!" And Private Satan wrung his hands and snivelled in his hammock.

The Fusiliers were back in the old home quarters at Southshot.

"Hey! hey!" shrieked the messenger boy who had for ten minutes been watching admiringly the sentry on the barrack gate pace his short beat. "Soger runnin' away! Soger desertin'! Guards turn out! Guards turn out!"

The sergeant of the guard came to the door of the guard room.

"Soger runnin' away!" screamed the boy, excitedly.

The sergeant rushed to the gate and looked up the street. The sent y who had been posted at the barrack gate was running up the street.

"Well I'm jiggered!" ejaculated the sergeant, "deserting in broad daylight and in full kit!"

Back he rushed to the guard room.

"Private Stairs, mount guard at the gate! Corporal Hughes, take Dare and Williams and chase Private Brodribb. He's deserting! Sharp!"

Out ran the corporal and his two men. But even as they reached the gate, in rushed the sentry Private Brodribb. With his fixed bayonet at the charge and eyes glaring angrily he ran across the barrack square towards the officers' quarters, thrusting his weapon repeatedly in front of him as though trying to transfix some invisible, escaping thing.

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Straight into the officers' quarters he dashed, into the mess-room where the officers sat at lunch. Round the long table he ran twice, stabbing the air in front of him and grinding his teeth in baffled fury; then out, along the corridor; into the quartermaster's room and out again; up the stone staircase into B Company's room; back again and out on to the verandah, followed now by the whole of the officers and a mob of the men.

"Sam Brodribb's gone mad!" was the cry.

To the furthest end of the narrow balcony ran the sentry in his baffled chase of the invisible quarry, making a terrific lunge which sent his bayonet against the stone wall, snapping the steel like matchwood. With a cry Brodribb dropped his rifle and leaping on the edge of the balcony rail in a wild endeavour to grasp the unseen foe, fell twenty feet on to the stone flags in the square below. A score of men rushed to him, but his neck was broken.

"Carry him to the mortuary," ordered the colonel, and the body was conveyed thence to await the surgeon's examination.

The officers and men stood about in groups, discussing the affair, for everyone was struck by the singular similarity which it bore to the circumstances attending the death of Private Fann a few weeks previously.

Suddenly Private Satan emerged from one of the barrack rooms on to the parade ground and staggered, rather than walked, towards the group of officers. He was a young fellow of eighteen and had joined the Army as a bandsboy four years before. His face was white as death and a wild fear was in his eyes as he looked all about him. Going up to the colonel he said, hoarsely:

"I w-w-want my discharge, sir."

The colonel stared. The idea of a man asking for his discharge in such an informal manner! Then the wild terror in Satan's appearance struck him.

"Why do you make that request here?" he asked.

"'Cos I'm afraid of my life!" cried Satan, wildly. "I'm afraid of everything. I wish I was locked up in a lunatic asylum where I'd be safe. Oh, dear! I wish I didn't go with Fann and Brodribb that day. Oh, that orful idol! He'll be runnin' me to my death next!" And Private Satan flung himself down on the dusty parade ground and burst into moans and sobs.

The officers flashed looks of sudden intelligence at each other.

"Private Satan!" said the colonel, sternly, "get up, man! Get up instantly!"

Satan obeyed, moaning and looking about with hunted, terror-stricken eyes.

Round he ran, thrusting savagely with his bayonet.

"Do you know anything about the deaths of Privates Fann and Brodribb?" asked the colonel.

"I knows what they died of," snivelled Satan, "they was—"

"Come to my room," interrupted the colonel. "Hamilton and D'Arcy, please come, too." And the colonel strode to his room, followed by the major and adjutant, with Private Satan in the rear.

"Sit down, Private Satan," said the colonel. "Now, what do you know about Fann and Brodribb?"

Private Satan drew his handkerchief from his left coat sleeve, wiped his eyes, and replacing the handkerchief, began:

"You remember the iron idol behind the bars of the fakir's tomb in the jungle at Thayetmayo, sir? The one you was always warnin' us not to meddle with?"

"Yes, I remember it perfectly. It was built into the wall of the tomb and protected by an iron grating," said the colonel.

"Well, sir, a month before we left Thayetmayo, me and Sam Brodribb and Jack Fann was strollin' about near the tomb. We'd 'ad a drop of toddy, just enuf to make us lark about reckless like, and when we came to the tomb Jack Fann said:

"'Tell you what, chummies. Three shies a penny at ole physic.'

"And he up with a stone and shied it at the idol. Me and Sam Brodribb joined in, although we knowed you'd punish us if you heard of it, sir, on 'count of the natives thinkin' it a saint. A devil I think it was, now. I wish I'd left it alone," and Satan began to weep afresh.

"Come, come, be a man. Go on with your story," said the colonel.

"Well, sir," continued Satan, "we pelted the idol with stones, the three of us, but not a blessed stone could we throw through the bars, 'though they was three inches apart. Something seemed to turn 'em all aside, and made us fair mad at last.

"'Hang your grinnin' mug!' said Jack Fann, 'you won't be hit, won't you? Have him out, lads. Down with the bars!'

"We was so mad at not bein' able to shy through the bars that we pulled down branches and forced the bars out. Jack Fann put his hand in and grabbed the idol.

"'Come here, you ugly brute,' said he, shakin' it by the throat.

"He was just goin' to dash it down on the ground when we heard a orful screech behind us, and the old yeller priest what lived in the hut near the tomb—you remember him, sir?"

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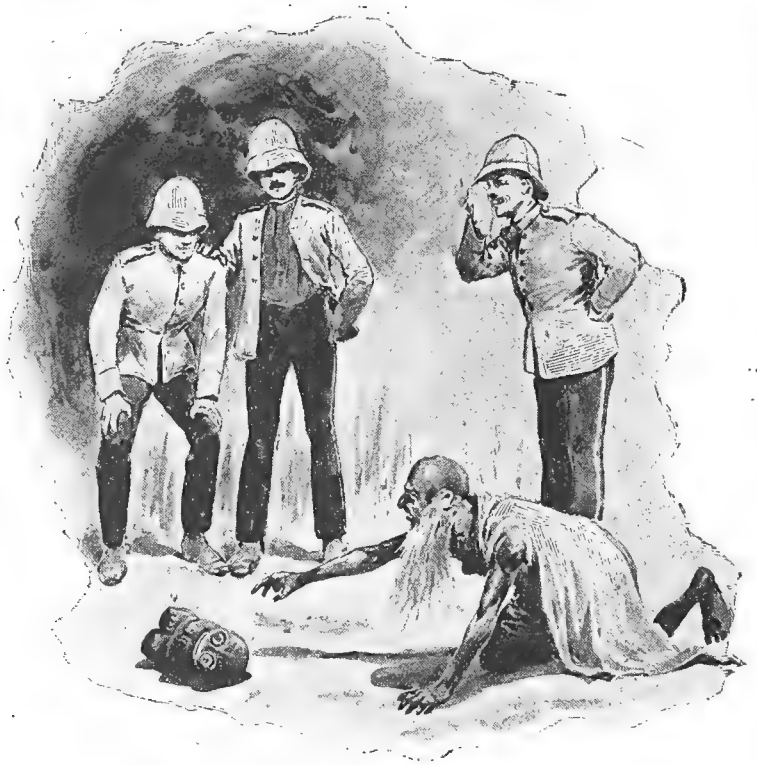

"He grabbed it as if it was a life-line chucked to him."

"Perfectly," said the colonel.

"Well, he comes rushing up, screamin' like mad.

"'What ho! Yeller Jack!' sez Fann, 'you wants it, do you? Will you 'ave it now or wait till you gets it?' And he dodges round the tomb with the priest after him, tryin' to grab him and get the idol back.

"'Now! Bob!' sez Jack, and he chucks the idol to me and the priest chases me. Well, we kep' the game up till the ole priest was fair winded and fell in a heap by the side of the tomb. I was holdin' the idol then.

"'Let the pore ole beggar 'ave it now, Bob,' sez Sam, and I chucked the idol at him.

"He grabbed it as if it was a life-line chucked to him and him drownin'. Then he gets up, and clawin' his right hand towards us he pushed the grinnin' iron idol into our faces.

"'As you have treated me,' sez he, 'so shall he treat you.' And he pointed to the idol. 'But you,' sez he, 'shall be run to death.' And then he folds the idol in his gown and goes off to his hut.

"We laffs and goes back to barracks and thinks no more about the bizness excep' as a good joke among ourselves, for we was afraid to tell of it 'cos we knowed we'd get it hot from you, sir, for interfering with the natives' religion. We was afraid, too, of the ole priest comin' and tellin' you, sir. But it seems he did'nt.

"The night after Jack Fann died"—Private Satan shuddered and looked fearfully about the room—"Sam Brodribb sez to me:

"'Bob, it was the idol he was chasin'!'

"'Oh, horrors!' sez I, and I turned cold to the marrer at the thought.

"'I knows it,' sez Sam, 'I feels it in my bones. You remember what the yeller priest said about our bein' run to death? Well that's what happened to Jack. And it's what'll happen to me. And it's what'll happen to you, Bob Satan. We're doomed men, Bob,' sez Sam.

"And since then I've lived in 'ell," said Private Satan, wringing his hands. "Wherever I am I expect to see that awful idol beck'nin' me to chase him. He ran Sam to death to-day, and now I'll be next." And Private Satan buried his face in his hands and groaned in utter despair.

The three officers looked at each other gravely. They had each spent years in India and knew enough of that land of mystery to treat Satan's story seriously.

"And you wish to purchase your discharge, Satan?" said the colonel.

"Yes, sir. No, sir. I doan' know what to do," groaned poor Satan despairingly.

"Well, return to your quarters now, and I'll think matters over," said the colonel, and Private Satan rose, saluted, and retired dejectedly.

"Queer story, major," said the colonel.

"Heard queerer ones," returned the major, "and they were true."

"Wish they'd left the thing alone," said the colonel. "I always hated that idol somehow. It looked so human."

"What is to be done about Satan, sir?" asked the adjutant.

"Upon my word I hardly know," said the colonel. "What can we do? We can't tie him up with ropes to prevent an invisible Burmese idol leading him on a chase to his death. Better let him buy out, I suppose. However, we'll see what frame of mind he's in to-morrow."

But next day the subject of Private Satan, although uppermost in the minds of the three officers, had to be held over owing to a sudden call for the regiment to furnish a strong draft for South Africa.

* * * * *

A group of colliers sat on the hillside a couple of miles outside of Southshot in the cool of the summer evening.

"Well, now," remarked one, "that soldier down there is enjoying himself all alone and no mistake."

"Ketchin' butterflies, ain't he?" said another.

"Looks like it. But my gosh, how excited he's gettin' over it. Look how they're dodgin' him! And yet I can't see a sign of a blessed butterfly!"

"I say," put in an older man, rising to his feet, "he's pritty reckless where he's going! He's runnin' full pelt for the old shaft. Hoy!" he roared.

But the scarlet-coated figure rushed on unheeding towards a disused old pit shaft, level with the ground and covered with a deceitful bramble growth.

"Good gracious!" shrieked the collier, "he's gone!"

And followed by his companions, he rushed to the shaft-head. But the soldier had fallen three hundred yards into the cold, black waters that filled the old workings and flowed swiftly for miles underground.

And such was the death of Private Satan.

W. J. Ormiston.

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A WOMAN'S PRIVILEGE.

AWAY up in the north countree, under the shadow of a long range of purple-brown hills, lies the pretty rural village of Shelsdon.

Not a hundred yards from the finger-post at the four cross roads, and immediately facing the village pump, stands the old toll-house, in which lived Widow Clark and her niece, Phœbe Turner.

Phœbe had lived at Shelsdon with her Aunt Clark since she was thirteen, and nine years had transformed the awkward, colty-looking girl into a lithe, supple, and decidedly pretty young woman. March had gone out with a roar, and April had come in with a smile.

Phœbe was sunning herself on the doorstep. From time to time she cast a hasty, inquisitive glance up the road. On Monday the last "Cinderella" of the season had taken place at the Market Hall, Bessborough. Bessborough was the county town, and from the High Cross at Shelsdon to the Market Hall at Bessborough was reckoned two miles.

Some anonymous admirer had sent Phœbe Turner a ticket for the dance, and asked her to wear cherry-coloured ribbons in her hair.

Phœbe had gone to the ball and worn the ribbons. This morning, as she gazed up the road towards Bessborough, her pretty face wore a discontented and somewhat peevish expression.

"Toosday, Wednesday, Thursday," she muttered, walking down to the edge of the footway. "'Twas Thursday as he said."

The miller's team from Hillingham were slaking their thirst at the water trough. It was the black team which had gained a prize at the county show, and a little knot of admirers were gathered round it. She stood watching the animals with a listless pre-occupied air till the waggoner set them in motion and scattered the crowd. Then she turned back towards the house.

"I'm gatten main tired, O' Shelsdon, I am," she murmured, lips pouting and eyes glistening. "'Tis nobbut blither an' blether wi' all of 'em. Job's allus goin' to do summat gran', but hoo's done nowt yet; an' course I maun sit mum till he likes t' whistle an' heed to nobbody's chirpin' but his'n. Aye! 'tis the men will put on you, aboove a bit—if yo' lat 'em. But I did think as Mr. ——"

Suddenly the girl stopped. She had caught sight of a well-known figure emerging from the big iron gates of Shelston Manor. It was the postman. An eager, expectant look leapt into her eyes. She walked forward a few yards to meet him. The man handed her a letter.

Phœbe glanced at the envelope, and the light in her eyes went out.

* * * * *

Phœbe was standing at the little table in the parlour with the letter in her hand. Once or twice she glanced at it in a half-contemptuous sort of way, finally throwing it down with a gesture of scornful impatience. It was the unexpected which had happened.

Phœbe had been counting the days since Monday. "Somebody" had promised her a letter on Thursday; but Thursday had come without bringing the letter. Fate, indeed, had played a trick on her.

"'Tis nobbut th' owd song fro' Job," she whined fretfully. "'Tis allus the same toon as he plays, an' I'm fair sick o' list'nin' to ut!"

She flung herself into the big armchair. Her eyes were misty with tears, her lips quivered with vexation.

"He canna have forgotten, sure-lie," she said, playing with the corner of her apron.

Five minutes passed. Her eyes wandered to the table. She leant forward, stretched out her hand, and picked up the neglected letter. Still she delayed to open it. Twice she let it fall while she sat absorbed in herself, seeing nothing about her, but following some will-o'-the-wisp fancy which had started across the waste spaces of her mind.

"Hey, dear!" she said presently, shaking herself together, "I be gatten the blues I do think," and tearing open the envelope with a petulant little movement she began to read the letter. The next minute she was calling up the stairs:

"Auntie! Auntie! 'Tis come. Job's sent for me, sure 'nuff. I'm to start o' the nineteenth! Dost hear? Be sharp down. I've suthin to show 'ee—suthin as'll mak thee stare till tha winna b'leeve thee can see straight!" And, running back to he parlour, the girl picked up a slip of pink-coloured paper which had been folded inside the letter.

"Well, naa, that's real nice of him," she murmured. "Hey! but Job's none such a bad lot, after all; an'—I really—do—luv—him," she added, her eyes still fixed on the bit of pink paper.

Suddenly she lost sight of it. She was in Bessborough Market Hall. It was the night of the Cinderella Ball. She was sitting out a dance with Mr. Frank Eversley,

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and certain words which had been whispered in her ear while she leisurely consumed the ice-pudding and other trifles which her cavalier had brought her recurred to her so vividly that she blushed at the recollection, even, as she had blushed when she had felt the warm breath of the speaker hot upon her cheek.

"Job's been yawin' about so long," she said to herself in justificatory tones; "sure, he canna' blame me if a gentleman as meets me in th' lane, wi' nobbutt mysel' to speak to, akses if he may walk wi' me to th' end on't. 'There'll be dozens of 'em,' said he, 'ready to snap 'ee up, when I'm not to-forrard to keep un aff.' He know'd it then, he did. He shu'd ha' sent sooner. How many years, I won'er, does a man expect a woman to sit mum at the stile a-waitin' for him?

"Would he be mad now if that wench o' Maybury's towd him that somebody sent me a ticket for the ball, and that I danced fower times with somebody? Well, 'tis nobbody but Job's ownsel's to blame. He shu'd ha' sent sooner, he shu'd."

She glanced again at the slip of coloured paper held between her fingers, and as her eye rested on it her heart melted towards the old love, who was divided from her by the whole width of the Atlantic.

"Poor old Job!" she murmured regretfully; "poor old Job!"

At this moment Widow Clark came into the room.

"Well, child, what hast gatten? Is Job foun' a fortin?" And the old lady laughed dubiously.

"When tha's done laughin', auntie, I'll show thee suthin' as'll mak thee begin agen," said Phœbe, who had hidden her hands behind her back.

"There!" she cried, suddenly spreading out the bank-draft on the little table; "look at that! That's what I've gatten: 'On demand pay to Phœbe Turner, or order'—I doan know what that's putten for—'the sum of Twenty Pounds.' Read it, aunt; read it thasel'."

She thrust the slip of pink paper into the old lady's hand, and went skipping about the room.

"Well," said Widow Clark, looking at her niece, "I allus did say yo'd better be born lucky than rich."

"An' I'm to go in the *Sardinian*, on the nineteenth," cried Phœbe, clapping her hands. "Sit down, auntie, sit thee down, while I finish th' letter."

A sheet of paper was lying on the floor. Phœbe had brushed it off the table in whirling round the room. She picked it up and began reading. By the time she got to the signature, the Bessborough Ball had faded from her mind; and her heart had gone back to the honest laddie who had left Shelsdon two years ago, to make a home for her 3,000 miles nearer the sunset.

"Well, well! won'ers 'll never cease. To think o' Job Tharn makin' his fortin'," was Widow Clark's comment as she left the room.

In the ill-written, ill-spelt letter of the old love, with its handsome inclosure for outfit and passage, the mercurial Phœbe found present compensation for her disappointment in not hearing from the new. She dutifully determined straightway to forget Mr. Frank Eversley, only son of the wealthy miller at Hillingham, and forthwith began to set about making preparations for the journey.

When the Bessborough postman handed in a letter in the evening addressed in a smart, neat hand, to "Miss Turner," Phœbe took it diffidently, slipped in into her pocket stealthily, and determined to destroy it at the first opportunity.

"I'll put un in the fire, I will. That's what I'll do wi' un."

But the letter was tumbled out of her pocket a few hours later when searching for some trifle before going to bed.

"Well, naa!" she exclaimed in tones of wonderment, a conscious blush overspreading her features at sight of it. She regarded the envelope with curious attention.

"I won'er what's in it?" she murmured, turning it over in meditative fashion. There was a monogram on the back. Phœbe had never received such an aristocratic-looking missive in her life before. The embossed letters in blue and gold seemed to fascinate her. Her resolution was obviously wavering. She sat down to think.

Over the washstand she had pinned a motto: "Do nothing rashly," she repeated, as the words caught her eye.

"'Tis plain as day I maun read the letter. It wur doin' rashly to take up with Job, an' prumise him all as he liked t' ask for. Of course," she ran on, "I needn' answer it—and then——"

Phœbe sighed. The prospect did not seem to offer much that was consoling. All this time the letter lay in her lap, her fingers fumbling it nervously. She was still casting about for an excuse to silence her scruples.

"Sure-lie a fren' can write to me if he wants to," she continued, toying with the letter, "and after him asking permission, too; 'twould be a sin not to read it. Job never said as I was to read no letters but his. Of course, I maun read it. 'Tis my letter, an' how'll I know what to do wi' him else?"

Phœbe read the letter—read it twice over—and for half-an-hour, by the little watch which hung on the wall, sat with it open in her hands. Then she got up, replaced it carefully in the envelope, and put it—back in her pocket.

* * * * *

At the lumber mills on White Oak River, Province of Quebec, Canada, the chips were flying, the saws whirring, and the air pungent with the aroma of fresh-cut pine. A man in a short jacket and long boots strode into the sawing shed, whistling a stave of "Annie Laurie."

The man driving the big "circular" looked up.

"Wal, Job, lad," he inquired, while his rugged features shaped themselves into a smile, "hast got th' cage 'bout fixed for that purty singin' bird what yo' catched owr yonner?"

"Owd Zac's putten the las' coat on this mornin'. The fixin's'll be up termorrer, an' by Sad'day, bless yo', she'll be fit for a princess. Ev'rything spick an' span, right an' reddy—bootiful as paint an' fit's a fiddle."

"Wal, mate, her pictur's that of a sonsie lass, an' she's wuth workin' for if she's waited two years for her man. There's many 'ud a sprung to the saddle an' ridden away. Lasses be kittle cattle. Yo' con never mak' sure of 'em when thee bain't fulin' roun' wi' 'em."

Jem Garrett and Job Thorn were partners running the lumber mill at White Oak. Garrett was a tall, bronzed, and bearded man of five and fifty "fur Lancasheer," who seven years before had buried his wife at the foot of the Rockies, and lost nearly all he possessed in an Indian raid on the Bow River. At Maple Creek he had stumbled across Job Thorn, took a liking to the lad, and the pair had chummed together ever since.

The men had occupied their leisure in building a

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pretty log house. There was a flower bed in front of the door, and a trellised veranda, which was continued round the sides, added a further attraction to the modest little dwelling. A panel inserted in the topmost bar of the white painted gate bore the word "Shelsdon" written in letters of brightest blue.

This was to be the home of Phœbe Turner, when that much-expected young person should assume the name and responsibilites of Mrs. Job Thorn.

And now at last the hour had struck, the "cage" was ready, and the "bird" was on the wing.

"Good-bye, lad, good-bye, an' joy be wi' thee," said Garrett as he shook Job by the hand on that eventful Saturday morning. "Yo'll hear th' cow-horn's min' soon's you turn Clem's Corner. The boys ha' been practising for a week."

* * * * *

In the wee sma' hours of Saturday, April 25th, the R.M.S. *Sardinian* was steaming up the St. Lawrence. She had made a phenomenal passage. At breakfast everybody was congratulating the commander on breaking the record. The passengers began mustering on deck.

By the round-house a young man and woman were engaged in animated conversation.

"Oh! Franky dear," she was saying, "of course, I b'lieve ut. But promise me again—promise never, never to lea' me. If he shud be at the wharf I think I shud die. Oh! 'twas madness dear, as prompted yo' to come—I owt never to have towd thee, I s'pose; but ——"

She gave a deep sigh and looked absently towards the strange new Canadian shores.

"Frank," she said suddenly, turning her eyes full on him. "I'm trustin' all to yo' dear. Yo'll——"

"Of course I will, darling. There, don't worry," interrupted the young man.

"Yo' canna' think what a dre'ful bad fright I got the mornin' as we left Liverpool. When I saw yo' standin' there by the smoke-room door I was just ready to sink thro' the deck. Oh, dear!" with another long sigh, "I thowt 'twas all 'flam' what tha' said. I thowt tha' did'n really mean it——an' I doan know now whether I be mos' glad or sorry.

"I s'pose 'tis hard on Job; but," looking at him fondly, "I'm fain to tak' thee, dearie, sin' tha's crossed th' water to be wi' me."

"And quarrelled with the governor, upset the mater, and—why dost ta knaw, my lass," he dropped into dialect now and then to humour her, "that my folk wunnot guess where I am till they get a cable."

"Frank, dear," she murmured, gazing passionately into his face, "I know yo' luv me—luv me; yes, more than yo' can tell. I knew ut weeks before yon happy night i' Bessboro'. Dost remember a walk thro' Hillingham Lane when th'-snadraps wur a comin' oot?"

He put his arm about her and cooed softly in her ear. She let her head fall upon his breast, smiling up at him with ineffable content.

"We was happy then, Frank," she said shyly.

"And you're happy now, dear, eh?"

A slight shiver convulsed her frame.

"Job," she stammered, "doan lat me see him. I doan want t' see him," then her voice broke and the tears began to fall.

"Was ever such a silly little goose! In an hour

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dear, we shall be at Quebec—nearly twenty-four hours before we're expected."

"What shall we do, Frank?" she asked timidly.

"Do? Get married as soon as we land. I know a dozen places where we can get the job done in five minutes for a dollar."

She glanced at him anxiously.

"Tied up, fair and square, Phœbe—tight as Book and bishop can bind us."

"An' then, dear?" the slightest suspicion of a quiver agitating her voice.

"Just you leave that to me, my pretty."

"Job won't be able to——"

"Don't bother this charming little head about Job." He was stroking the rich brown tresses which hung thickly about the little head. "You're my property now."

She huddled closer to him.

"I've written a letter for Mr. Thorn. There's a bank draft inclosed for that money, and I've told him that you've simply exercised a woman's privilege, and changed your mind."

* * * * *

Two days after the phenomenal run of the *Sardinian* had been cabled to England there was a big blaze at White Oak, and next morn ng Job Thorn was missing, while the pretty log-house which had stood in the clearing was discovered to be in ashes.

* * * * *

Mr. Frank Eversley yawned, stretched himself, and throwing back the well-poised, carefully-brushed head he was so proud of, stared blankly up at the boarding-house ceiling. In front of him lay a letter received that morning from England. It bore the Bessboro' postmark, and was directed in a familiar hand, that of Mr. Eversley senior. It was the second communication of a similar kind which the post had brought within a month.

The writer intimated that, while willing to make reasonable excuse for a young man's folly, it would be a gross neglect of duty on the part of a father not to put his foot down firmly when he found his son "plunging," in a mad attempt to recover gambling losses on the turf. "To go off in a 'pet,'" the writer went on, "with only half-a-dozen lines left behind, to say that they would hear from him later on, was both cruel to his mother and disrespectful to his father; but, after fifteen weeks, it was surely time the breach was healed. His debts had now been paid, and there was no reason why he should not return home. Squire Fotherby, up at the Hall, was always wanting to know whether the lad would be back in time for the pheasants."

"It's a beastly nuisance!" ejaculated Frank Eversley, watching a fly progressing slowly across the yellow plaster. "A beastly nuisance. I must get that attorney fellow, Hueffler, to put it through for me. Of course, I always knew it would come to this. But I don't find the job so easy now the hour's struck."

He mused awhile, drawing down his brows.

"I ain't half sorry now that she fired up like a furze-bush the other day, about staying on at the boarding-house. It'll make the road a bit smoother—for me.

"When was I going to make a home for her, eh? Job, she said, had got the house ready before ever he sent for her; but she'd been married now over thirteen weeks, and still wanted a home. H'm!

"Married? Well, it's convenient for me that she thinks so! Yes, Hueffler's the man for this job. I'll leave a bit of paper for her, and get 'Dukey' to break it gently."

* * * * *

"No occasion, Mr. Eversley, for you to be troubled in the matter at all," said "Dukey" (Marmaduke) Hueffler, the boss attorney of Watersville, State of Indiana. "Just sign these papers and make an affidavit, and we can get a nullity pronounced in the Third Court on the ground of informality. The lady, I presume, will not contest it. You can slip away quietly, and after you're gone we'll serve her with the papers. There'll be no time lost in getting a decision; and by next mail we'll communicate the result."

* * * * *

"Phœbe, dear," said Frank Eversley, hurriedly. The bell was ringing for dinner, and the boarders were hastening to their places. "I had a letter this mor ing which makes it imperative for me to return to England for awhile—a business letter," he added shamefacedly. She looked at him steadily.

"You won't mind ——"

"You don't mean to come back to me," she interrupted sharply; her woman's instinct reading something in his face, which her keen eye saw there. The bell stopped ringing.

"Come down to dinner now, and I'll explain afterwards," he urged.

But Phœbe had gone back into the room and closed the door with a bang.

* * * * *

Twelve months later a weary-looking man, in a coarse serge suit, was passing down the Bowery in New York City. A woman, meeting him, suddenly rushed off the sidewalk and threw herself in front of an approaching tramcar. In an instant the man had dashed after her. Covering her face with her hands, the woman sobbed hysterically. The man, trembling in every limb, bore her to a place of safety. Not a word was spoken, but the "touch-electric" revealed to Job that he held Phœbe clasped within his arms.

* * * * *

"Ha! thee heerd th' noos?" asked one gossip of another meeting one morning in early June under the shadow of t.e High Cross opposite the toll-house at Shelsdon.

"Job Tharn an' Phœbe Turner be gotten married."

"Never!"

"Aye! 'tis jes' true. 'Tis Job hissel' who sends th' letter."

"Well! after that, I'll nobbut say as sky woan fall."

"Aye, they've takken ther time to fin' ther tongues."

The brief paragraph which had appeared in the *Watersville Sentinel* had never given Mr. Frank Eversley a moment's uneasiness. The obscure western print was never likely to be seen by English eyes.

The paragraph ran:

"Mr. Frank Eversley, of this town, has obtained a divorce from his wife. The knot seems to have been tied very loosely by some person not properly qualified to perform the ceremony."

For a few weeks Job Thorn and Phœbe Turner filled every mouth in Shelsdon; but before harvest-end fresh food for gossip had been found in the announcement that a marriage had been arranged between Frank Eversley, esquire, of Harleyford Mills, and Emma Fotherby, only daughter of Squire Fotherby, of Hillingham Hall.

Hupert Bartlett.

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THE BRAIN GYMNASIUM.

In these competitions a prize of £2 will be awarded each week to the competitor whose attempt we receive giving the correct solutions of all the puzzles. If more than one is absolutely correct the prize of £2 will be given to the first correct attempt dealt with.

If no lists of absolutely correct solutions are sent in the first prize will be awarded to the competitor whose attempt is first dealt with showing the fewest mistakes.

Each week we shall award in addition to the above, either ten of our silver-plated pencil-cases or ten popular novels, to be distributed amongst the competitors whose attempts are absolutely correct and have failed to win the first prize, or, if no complete lists of correct solutions are received, to those whose attempts show the fewest mistakes.

Write all your solutions on one sheet of paper, putting the number against each. Post the batch in an envelope marked "Brain Gymnasium," to reach the Editor, Short Stories, 18 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, W.C., by first post on Monday, October 29th, 1900.

Readers are invited to submit puzzles, acrostics, conundrums, word-squares, etc., for publication on this page. A penknife will be given to each reader whose attempts are used. All attempts must be vouched for as original, and, of course, it is distinctly understood that the sender of a puzzle must neither compete in the competition nor divulge to anyone the solution. Any reader found infringing this rule will be severely dealt with.

No. 241.

A document: a personal pronoun; a verb; a vowel; an excrescence; joyful; a building material.

The equivalents of these name a great statesman.

No. 242.

Re-arrange the following letters, so as to form a double-word square, the connecting word of which is a means of travelling:

A B EEEEEE II L MM NN OOOO RR SSSS TTTTTT.

No. 243.

A flower; an imitation of gold; an actor; what children dislike; a comfort; to irritate; a task.

My initials and finals express respectively what the reader of this page does, and what he likes to do.

No. 244.

My 8, 4, 9, 3, grows in every garden.
My 2, 10, 11, 7, 8, is to permit.
My 5, 2, 6, is a game of cards.
My 1, 4, 11, 10, is what most cyclists carry.

I am a word of eleven letters, and give the name of a well-known man.

No. 245.

The equivalents of the following each contain three consecutive letters, which, put together in the same order, give a well-known proverb:

A foreign coin; bearing; a Surrey town; a stride; snakes; forwarded; an English health resort; spare time; immaculate.

No. 246.

The social scale is of no avail,
To all my FIRST is a dower,
And the female, likewise the male,
Are in FIRST of equal power.

In physical skill my SECOND will
Make proficient all who essay,
And the ladies, again, of nought complain,
As in SECOND they have their day.

But to come to the test, my WHOLE is the best,
Especially when a prize it may render,
And the answer you'll find is the work of the mind
Of the masculine or feminine gender.

RESULT OF BRAIN GYMNASIUM.

Nos. 217 to 222.

The first prize of £2 has been awarded to Mr. Charles Stephens, of 28 Sandringham Road Fratton, Portsmouth, whose solution was the first correct one dealt with.

A copy of "The Legacy of Hate," by Theo Douglas, has been sent to the following:

W. J. Barter, Douglas Street, Cork.
Miss M. Smith, Alma Road, Sheerness.
H. B. Thompson, Bracknell, Berks.
Miss L. Kellehar, Bannockburn Road, Plumstead.
S. Harrall, Station Road, Plumstead.
H. Cammack, Radcliffe Street, Liverpool.
Mrs. Bailles, Kingsland Road, N.E.
J. M. Child, Clarence Street, Derby.
E. G. Luck, Hazlebury Road, Fulham.
Miss May Seccombe, Balmoral Road, New Brompton.

SOLUTION OF BRAIN GYMNASIUM.

Nos. 223 to 228.

No. 223. Wey, yew, Wye.

No. 224. Silence.

No. 225. "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."

No. 226.

L impl D
b O ro U s
he N e it
mi LD ew
p ige O n
N otio N

No. 227. DONKEY.

No. 228.

M a Y
O rang E
N u N
E ch O
Y a M

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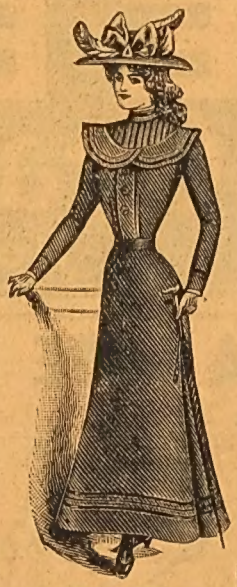

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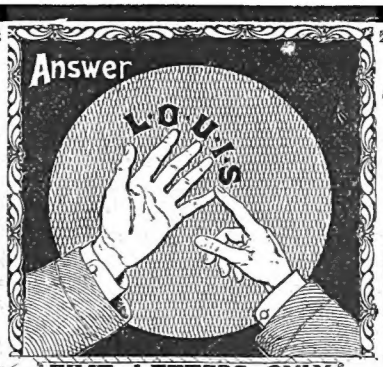

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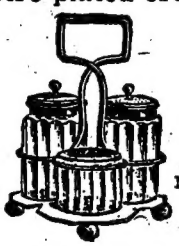

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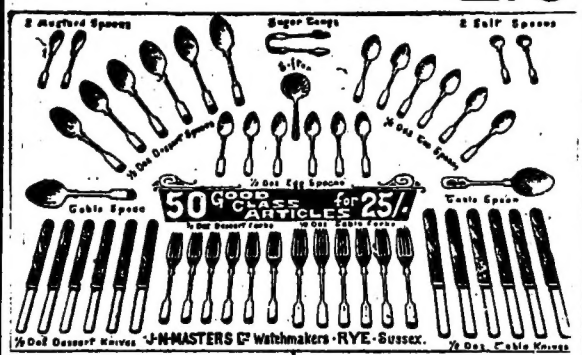

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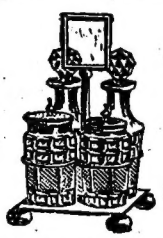

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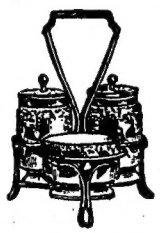

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